

CARIBBEAN QUARTERLY

VOLUME 4 : NUMBER 2



COVER ILLUSTRATION:

"ALL SAINTS"

Photo by David Lee

COVER ILLUSTRATION :

"ALL SAINTS"

Photo by David Lee

IN many West Indian Islands, especially but not exclusively those under Catholic influence, it is customary to keep the Festival of All Saints, or Toussaint, by cleaning up and adorning with fresh flowers the family graves, and illuminating them from twilight onwards with candles. In the evening the family meet together at home, dressed in best clothes and visit the cemetery, where they stand around the graves, talk, and meet friends and neighbours. Prayers may be said by the more pious, and "chilibibi", a mixture of ground parched corn and sugar, is eaten. This is so light and dry that if a person eating it can be made to laugh, it flies out in all directions, both through the mouth and the nose. Whilst the atmosphere of the cemetery is generally one of quiet in any family sociability, it is sometimes an occasion of rowdyism, since the adolescent likes to compete in the collection of candle grease and may well raid graves for candles still burning.

Although the illumination takes place the evening of All Saints Day, it can be more appropriately regarded as the eve of All Souls, since its content comports to this festival, rather than the former commemoration of the departed. From the point of view of folk belief the practice appears to be one of many ways in which the spirits of the family dead are placated and set at rest, though one of the few which receives official church support and approval. The photograph on the cover shows candles on the steps of the house of a man who could not go to the cemetery but who wished to welcome the spirits, regarded as abroad on this night of the year.



View of the entrance to St. Joseph Cemetery, Trinidad, with moon above the Lintel.



Lower St. Joseph Cemetery. Bands of light are the appearance under exposure, of candles being carried by hand.

CARIBBEAN QUARTERLY

	PAGE
THE TEACHING OF HISTORY IN THE AMERICAS J. H. Parry	87
FESTIVALS OF THE CALENDAR IN ST. LUCIA Daniel J. Crowley	99
LAUNCHING A SCHOONER IN CARRIACOU Bruce Procope	122
THE SHADOW AND THE SUBSTANCE Rawle Farley	132
TOBAGO VILLAGERS IN THE MIRROR OF DIALECT H. B. Meikle	154
QUATER-CENTENARY OF RICHARD EDEN'S 'DECADES OF THE NEWE WORLDE OR WEST INDIA, ETC.' John A. Ramsaran	161
BALLAD OF CANGA Eric Roach Translation into <i>Taki-Taki</i> by Albert Helman	165 167
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	169

EDITOR :

ANDREW PEARSE, La Fantaisie Road, St. Ann's, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, B.W.I.

Single copies can be obtained in the British West Indies from booksellers or from Resident Tutors of the Extra Mural Department, in the various territories whose addresses are:—

Jamaica	...	...Hugh Morrison, Extra Mural Department, University College of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica.
British Honduras		...Rawle Farley, Regent Street, Belize, British Honduras.
Leeward Islands		...Douglas Hall, Extra Mural Department, St. John's, Antigua.
Windward Islands		...B. H. Easter, Bridge Street, Castries, St. Lucia.
Barbados	...	...A. Douglas Smith, Boy Scout Headquarters, Beckles Road, St. Michael, Barbados.
British Guiana		...Adolph Thompson, 78, Carmichael Street, Georgetown, British Guiana.
Trinidad and Tobago	...	...Norman H. Booth, La Fantaisie Road, St. Ann's, Port-of-Spain.

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

Subscribers in British West Indies	...	...\$1.50 (B.W.I.) or 6/3 (4 issues post free)
Subscribers in the United Kingdom	...	...6/3
Do.	do. United States of America	...\$1.50 (U.S.)
Do.	do. Canada	...\$1.50 (Canadian)
Do.	do. Haiti	...6 gourds

Fill in the form below and send with subscription to:

ANDREW CARR

Caribbean Quarterly Editorial Office,
La Fantaisie Road,
St. Ann's Port-of-Spain,
TRINIDAD, B.W.I.

or c/o Trinidad Building and Loan Association,
Cor. Queen and Chacon Streets, Port-of-Spain,
TRINIDAD, B.W.I.

CUT OFF

"CARIBBEAN QUARTERLY" SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Name :

Address :

I enclose in payment of subscription(s)

valid from Vol. No. for 4 issues.

Signed:

Date:

The Teaching of History in the Americas

A Study of the place of National and Continental History in the
curriculum of School and University

J. H. PARRY

I—THE PURPOSE OF HISTORICAL TEACHING

UNESCO has for some years been concerned with the use and abuse of history as a means of promoting international understanding. In the summer of 1951 a conference of history teachers met at Sèvres to discuss the problems of their trade from this point of view. Despite inevitable and natural differences of opinion, the participants reached a wide measure of general agreement. In the pamphlet¹ which summarises the findings of the conference, the following significant paragraphs occur :

"There can be little doubt that the majority of history teachers the world over, called on to justify their work, would find common ground in a single concept—that of training for national citizenship. The child is one day to vote, perhaps to serve in the army, to pay taxes, to take a part great or small in the working life of his native land, to carry out the duties of a citizen. One of the special functions of history teaching in schools, therefore, has been to help to develop in children a love of their own country, and an understanding of its traditions and its ways of life; how the homeland has become united or has freed itself from foreign rulers, how its system of government has come into being, what are its distinctive customs and traditions, what changes have taken place in its economic and social life, and so on. A survey of history curricula in the schools of the majority of Member States of UNESCO reveals that the teaching of national history predominates at every stage of the school course, and is as evident in countries with a decentralised school system as in those where national control of education is far-reaching.

"This is understandable and reasonable. But the citizen these days must concern himself with problems that transcend national frontiers. For men now live on a globe which is shrinking and a world which is fast becoming a closely inter-related unit. The swift growth of means of communication has hastened the exchange of ideas and material goods between remote parts of the world. Modern scientific progress holds out the hope of a better standard of life for all. The forces of technical change, building complex industries which draw their raw materials from the ends of the earth and distribute the finished goods all over the world, have created methods of transport which

1. C. P. Hill, *Suggestions on the teaching of History*, Paris, UNESCO, 1953.

makes inter-continental travel a commonplace. Nation is dependent on nation as never before. This dependence, clear in the friendly intercourse of peace-time, has been driven into men's minds and hearts by the terrible argument of war. Men must learn to live together, and the two world wars of this century have brought in their train the first elaborate attempts to establish permanent international organisations in the political field, the League of Nations and the United Nations Organization. The League did not endure; UN remains, embodying the political concept of the twentieth century, that of constructive co-operation between the nations of the world. In this concept lies an element of national citizenship which is vital to modern men" . . .

The writer goes on to complain of past distortion of historical truth in the interests of national pride, and to recommend history "properly taught" as a means of inculcating and reconciling patriotism and international understanding.

As an analysis of an existing situation, and as a declaration of worthwhile aims, this statement no doubt commands general agreement. Its assumption, however, that history teaching is necessarily a valid and effective means towards those aims, is not so clear. History is the study of the doings of men and women in the past; in particular, of the development of recognisable groups or communities of men and women, measured along the scale of time. The purposes of such a study have been defined in many different ways, but three may be mentioned as pre-eminent. The first is self-knowledge. It has long been a commonplace of philosophy that man should seek to know himself. We study what men have thought, said and done, the better to understand what man is. A second purpose is to provide an intelligible account of the accumulated experience of particular communities, which may help the members of those communities to understand and to deal with the predicaments in which they find themselves; for communities, like individuals, rely largely upon memory, upon experience, to guide their conscious actions. The historian is the keeper of society's memory. Thirdly, the study of history is undertaken as an intellectual exercise, a training in the practice of discovering, arranging and interpreting evidence, in order to establish conclusions which shall command agreement, or at any rate respect. The usefulness of such a mental training for those who are concerned with the conduct of public affairs hardly needs demonstration. It is relevant to recall the long list of eminent statesmen, from Thucydides to Sir Winston Churchill, who have also been distinguished historians. Not all great statesmen wrote history, but as far as we know most of them made it their business to read it.

History in the past, however, has usually been an aristocratic training, the preserve of small numbers of people who were well-educated in other ways as well. Nowadays public affairs are not necessarily, perhaps not even usually, in aristocratic hands. Political responsibility is spread in varying degrees through the whole citizen body and it may readily be conceded that the intellectual qualities fostered by history ought to be correspondingly widespread. The pamphlet just quoted makes this clear; but it makes, or implies, other claims for the wide study of history. History is to be taught and used to inculcate attitudes of will and emotion—loyalty and devotion towards one's

own country, friendliness towards other peoples—and to further a policy,—the support of organs of international discussion and co-operation. It is this part of the thesis of the pamphlet which raises doubts in the mind of the working historian. An old fashioned positivist, of the school which exercised so profound an influence in many parts of the Americas in the later nineteenth century, at the very time when the study of history was coming into its own, would reject it outright. Either history is a science, he would say, or it is not. If it is not, then it is mere story-telling, a minor branch of literature, or worse, of propaganda; it is not a serious discipline and probably ought not to be taught at all. On the other hand, if history is a science, then it will be objective, neutral. Understanding something, in a scientific sense, is not the same as being devoted to it. A man will not necessarily be made a more patriotic citizen by studying his country's history, any more than by studying, say, its geology. This is an extreme view, of course, and one from which historians have tended to retreat in the last fifty years. Nevertheless, many, perhaps most working historians today consider their study to be scientific and objective in some degree at least, and would regard it as an unsuitable means to the ends which the pamphlet describes.

Although the procedure of the historian differs in important respects from that of the natural scientist the study of history is in fact marked by a considerable degree of scientific objectivity; and where the historian ventures upon judgment, the rules of his craft require him to state the point of view on which his judgment is based, and so rob him of the power to impose his own opinions (or those of his employers) upon the inexperienced or unwary, in the guise of objective truth. History "properly taught" therefore, is not a suitable or effective vehicle of propaganda, even where the objects of propaganda command general respect. How, then, can the teaching of history be legitimately directed to the particular, and sometimes apparently contradictory, ends of training in national citizenship and international understanding? Not, to be sure, by abandoning the accepted procedure of historical investigation, however much that procedure may have to be simplified in order to be understood by the inexperienced. Still less by suppressing or distorting historical evidence; no reputable historian would countenance such a suggestion, and the participants in the Sèvres conference explicitly rejected it. Apart from objections based on moral considerations, the "noble lie" is notoriously apt to be found out, and to recoil upon its perpetrators, however public-spirited their intentions. The only legitimate way of directing historical teaching towards stated ends seems to lie in the selection of subject matter. Now, selection is an essential part of the historian's craft; one of his main tasks is always the selection of the relevant and the significant from the great masses of evidence at his disposal. What is vitally important is that the selection of subject matter to be taught should be based upon the same principle as the selection of evidence to be included in honest historical research. It should consider what is relevant for the citizen to know, not what is expedient for him to believe. This principle, to a gathering of competent professional historians such as the present one, may appear platitudinous; but we all know how rarely it is found to be consistently and rigorously applied.

Of course we can have no guarantee that a system of history teaching based on the principles here set out will foster national loyalty or encourage international good will. A detailed and objective study of the events leading to the massacre of Drogheda will not create, in the minds of all Irish pupils, a desire to know the English better. We must recognise that history—even true history can be intellectual and political dynamite. All that we can be sure of, is that history “properly taught” will tend to encourage an attitude of critical intelligence in national and international affairs. If we want to create citizens who will be docile and unthinkingly loyal, who will give no trouble to Government, we shall be ill-advised to teach them history. If, on the other hand, we want a citizen body to be well-informed, politically alert, vigilant for truth, resistant to propaganda yet open to conviction by reasoned argument, able to weigh the possible as well as the desirable—then we shall face the risks involved whether or not we consider “my country right or wrong” to be a respectable moral maxim, we shall so educate our young men that they may *know* whether their country is right or wrong at any given moment in the past or present; or at least be equipped to form a reasonable judgment in the matter.

II—THE CONTENT OF HISTORICAL TEACHING

The teaching of history appears to occupy a larger place in school and university curricula in the American countries—particularly in Latin America—than anywhere else except England (where history in recent years has outstripped the Classics as the favourite basis of a liberal education and as a passport to the higher ranks of the public service). The UNESCO pamphlet already cited remarks, of history teaching in the world as a whole, that “in the most propitious circumstances history is only one of a large and growing range of subjects which can stake a legitimate claim for inclusion in the school curricula of an increasingly elaborate world. The child who is taught history for four hours every week of his last years at school is receiving quite exceptionally favourable treatment. For most children at primary level, the principal task of most teachers is the development of the basic skills like reading, writing and simple arithmetic, and in such circumstances history has to find its place in plans for teaching these skills; at secondary schools level, two hours history per week is probably a generous average. So far as generalisation is possible, the time available for the study of history is almost invariably short and more often than not, desperately so.”

The reports on the teaching of history published in recent years by the Comisión de Historia in Mexico show that in most American countries at least three and often four hours per week are devoted to history in most school years. In Argentina—where no doubt the tradition of a series of famous historian-statesmen has affected the prestige of the subject—the time devoted to history at secondary school level is in some years as much as five hours a week, more, in fact than to any other subject. In Mexican secondary schools, also, history, geography and “civics” are highly favoured subjects.

In the United States, generalisation is extremely difficult, partly because education is almost entirely de-centralised, and partly because considerably more attention is given there than elsewhere to sociology and kindred studies. Whether such subjects are suitable for teaching in schools, and whether they can be regarded as serious academic disciplines, is a matter of discussion; but at least they must involve some thinking of a historical kind, and they are naturally studied in conjunction with history itself. In general, then, history gets a generous share of time and attention in educational systems throughout the Americas, and this should be a matter of satisfaction to those of us who believe in the educational value of the subject.

We have seen that in directing historical studies towards the training of useful citizens, the distribution of emphasis among different branches of history according to their relevance is of great importance. Few would deny that the most important requirement, from the point of view both of society, and of the citizen's own happiness and inner harmony, is that he should understand the history, the accumulated experience, of the community to which he feels that his over-riding loyalty is due. This will be, as a general rule, his native country; though impressive claims may be advanced in some cases, on behalf of other communities—the particular locality in which he lives, or the church to which he belongs. Then, he must know something of other countries whose history has been closely connected with his own and whose culture or policy has significantly affected his country's development. These other countries may be associated under the heading of a common civilization; or else geographically, as forming part of the same continent or being grouped round the same connecting sea. Thirdly, there may be some grounds for attempting to teach him something of the history of mankind over the world as a whole, ambitious though such an undertaking may seem. And finally, there are persuasive arguments for including in any history syllabus a period of study of some community not directly connected with the student's own country, but remote from it in space, or time, or both, as an intellectual exercise and a stimulus to the imagination.

From the point of view of relevance to actual life (not necessarily from that of intellectual training) the right division of a historical course between local history, national history, regional history, and so on, is much more important and difficult than, say, the division of a biology course between botany and zoology—even if only because the effects of a wrong division upon the minds of students may have serious social consequences. A reasonable balance is the obvious aim. If we accept a rough division of historical studies under the heads of the history of individual states, the history of the continent as a whole and the history of the world, what is the present state of the division in American countries today, and how—if at all—ought it to be changed?

(1) NATIONAL HISTORY

"Nationality" is an ambiguous term. In the precise parlance of international law it means citizenship of a particular sovereign state; but it can also be used loosely to mean membership of a nation, whether or not that nation forms a sovereign state. For "state" and "nation" are not necessarily synonymous terms, though governments, for patriotic and emotional reasons, often use them as if they were. "Sovereign state" is a precise term, capable of legal (and usually of geographical) definition. A nation, on the other hand, though, it is usually fairly easy to recognise, is hard to define. The elements which usually produce nationhood are race, language, religion, social tradition, and political association under a common government; but none of these is indispensable, and none of them will necessarily produce nationhood. The basic test is, indeed, the sense of separateness and solidarity; nationhood exists when those concerned believe in it. This statement, based though it is on purely subjective considerations, is probably as near as we can get to a working definition. The history of the last few centuries, especially in the western world, shows that most groups of people who believe themselves to be nations sooner or later evince a desire to form sovereign independent states. Conversely, a group of people, though initially lacking common traditions, if subject to a common government, whether as a sovereign state or as a separate province of an empire, will probably, as a result of political association or of deliberate propaganda, come in time to think of itself as a nation. The study of American history is very largely concerned with the working of these two processes—the translation of the feelings of nationhood into political statehood, and vice versa. For this reason it is especially important for us to be careful in our use of terms, and to be sure, as far as we can, of our own accuracy and impartiality in defining topics for historical study. For by the very definition of topics, historical teaching—often unconsciously and without propagandist intent—can promote or retard the processes just described. For the purposes of this paper, then, "nationality" is used in its international-law sense, and "national history" means the history of sovereign states. There can be little doubt that for most pupils this interpretation corresponds with existing loyalties. It meets the requirement, already suggested, that historical teaching should concern itself with the recording and studying of events, and should not seek to influence them. It corresponds also, of course, to political reality: for sovereign states are the units with which we, as organisers of historical training, have chiefly to deal. They pay for most of the instruction we impart, and they have the power, if they wish, to prescribe what we shall teach.

In almost all American countries, national history predominates at nearly every stage of the school curriculum. Almost everywhere it occupies more than half the total time allotted to history. Many governments have enacted formal legislation embodying requirements of this kind for the national schools throughout their jurisdiction. In Mexico, the Constitution itself lays down general principles of education; and the programme of instruction for primary

and secondary schools prescribes in some detail the way in which historical teaching is to be directed towards the inculcation of patriotic and democratic ideas (though it prudently avoids a definition of democracy, and specifically warns teachers against racial, religious and other prejudices). In the United States, the teaching of national history is complicated, in the publicly-maintained schools, by the fact that education is the responsibility of the component states of the Union, and not of the Federal Government. In general, national history appears to occupy a rather smaller proportion of the history-teaching time in the United States than in most other American countries, and the proportion at present shows a tendency to decline. It varies greatly from grade to grade. In the year 1946-47 for example, the proportion in the seventh grade was 27 per cent., in the eighth 76 per cent., in the ninth none, (because "Civics" takes its place), in the tenth 7 per cent., in the eleventh 84 per cent., in the twelfth 32 per cent. Forty-six of the forty-eight states require national history to be taught in the elementary schools. A minority of states also demand state history, though the educational value of such a field—narrower than national, wider than local, and highly arbitrary in limits—may perhaps be questioned. Generalisation is difficult; for United States education in all fields—not only history—is characterised by great diversity, readiness to experiment, and a wide range of alternatives for the pupil's choice. It can safely be said, however, that no pupil can pass through the national school system without a stiff dose of national history.

In most American countries, elementary teaching includes instruction in what might be called patriotic customs and courtesies. This, indeed, is common practice in many parts of the world. It may be asked, however, whether this very important instruction might not logically and conveniently be detached from history courses and dealt with separately. The respects due to national anthems, national flags and other emblems, and to high officers of State (though they can be historically explained) are not primarily matters of historical study. They are partly matters of conventional good manners, partly expressions of devotion. In this, as in all our teaching, we should try to distinguish between our scientific and objective scrutiny of the past (as far as we can make it so) and our proper and natural concern to foster appropriate loyalties in the present and future.

To return to our main theme : the historical development of the Americas has three marked peculiarities. One is its comparative brevity. No national state has had as much as two hundred years of independent existence; some have had much less. Even if we push back the beginnings of national history (as seems sensible and logical) to the beginnings of European settlement and beyond, the span of systematically recorded history is in no case more than about four and a half centuries. The second peculiarity is that recorded history in this continent begins abruptly, with a series of recognisable events—discovery, conquest, settlement. It does not, as in the Old World, grow out of the mists of pre-history by slow degrees in remote periods of time. The change from pre-history to developed recorded history is achieved, as it were, in a sudden and relatively recent leap. Thirdly, the other obvious major change in national development, the emergence of independent states, also occurred abruptly. Of course, there were powerful

pre-disposing circumstances; but the actual events of independence took the form of political moves, consciously and deliberately designed towards the ends which they, in fact, largely achieved. Some of these moves took place simultaneously in the history of a number of states; and most of them were accompanied by extensive violence. These peculiarities must have profound effects upon our teaching of national history. Let us examine each briefly in turn.

The comparative brevity of the period covered by the national history of the American states, together with the relatively generous school time allotted to it, make possible a study remarkable for thoroughness and detail. This is true for all stages of education, in primary and secondary schools, and at the universities. Probably in no other region in the world do young men and women receive a more thorough grounding in the history of their respective countries, than in Latin America. A number of university institutions offer national history programmes of great distinction and originality.

The second peculiarity of the American past—the sudden and relatively recent leap from pre-history into recorded history—raises educational questions of a different kind. The pre-history of the Americas is full of interest and in some parts of the continent concerns communities of great complexity and a high level of cultural achievement. Much of this achievement has survived in recognisable form, and has even, in some places, continued to develop independently. Many features of contemporary life are clearly pre-Columbian in origin, and it is impossible to make a serious historical study of—say—Mexico, or Peru, or Ecuador, without some knowledge of pre-history. It is much more important for a student of Mexican history to understand the significance of Cholula or Teotihuacán, than it is for a student of English history to understand the significance of Stone-henge. This obviously places an additional load upon the teacher of history; for though the historian and the archaeologist are collaborators in elucidating the past, they work with very different techniques; and the American teacher of history, to be efficient, must to some extent understand both. If the teacher has the qualifications and the time, and is prepared to take the trouble, the situation has great educational advantages; for the study of pre-history, based upon the examination of concrete objects—buildings, artefacts and the like—provides a valuable and welcome complement to the study of history, based as it is upon written records. The importance attached to pre-history naturally varies greatly from country to country, as do the opportunities for such study; it deserves to be even more widely recognised than it is at present in many countries as a valuable educational asset.

Pre-history obviously cannot be fitted neatly into any scheme of national history; it can be taught more profitably on a rather narrowly local scale, particularly to young children. Young children naturally have a much clearer picture of their own district, which is real in their experience, than of the national state, which to them is rather an abstraction. Visits to local prehistoric sites, together with stories about the people who inhabited them, provide perhaps the best of all means for inculcating historical imagination and a sense of time—faculties which are not natural to young children, but which are clearly essential for the study of history proper.

The third characteristic of the American past, the dramatic yet deliberate nature of the events leading to independence, is common to almost all countries throughout the continent, and in almost all countries has affected the handling of national history in the same way, though in differing degrees. Throughout most of the nineteenth century historical teaching, and writing intended for teaching purposes, in the Americas was coloured by a suspicion of Europe in general, and particularly of the European countries against whose governments American independence had been asserted. Suspicion in the political field was no less intense, because accompanied by a genuine admiration and affection in other fields. Today that suspicion is almost extinct, and even school text-books display, in dealing with the events of independence, some of the objectivity which serious historians have always maintained. There is a portrait of George III in the White House and a statue of George Washington in Trafalgar Square. The story of independence still occupies an extremely prominent place in history curricula in schools throughout the continent, as is natural, since for most American countries independence was a uniquely important event. The many factors of continuity between old imperial province and new sovereign state still tend sometimes to be overlooked; and the part played by individual leaders of the independence period still tend to be exaggerated. Of course, the place of the individual hero in historical development is a matter about which historians have always argued and always will argue. Educationally, the cult of the national hero has its merits, for the instinct to "praise famous men" is spontaneous, natural, and right. It has also its dangers, and the most obvious danger is that of defeating its own purpose. A boy who is encouraged in uncritical hero-worship at school is likely to react by an equally uncritical "de-bunking" when he becomes an undergraduate. We do no dis-service to the memory of great men if we teach our pupils to see them steadily and see them whole.

II

(2) CONTINENTAL HISTORY

The concept of national history, as we have seen, presents relatively little difficulty, provided we are clear in our minds about what we mean by "national". National history forms the core of history teaching in most countries, and must do so. We now have to face a much more difficult problem: how best to introduce the student to the history of a community wider than that of his own country. The term "community" is important here. History is the accumulated experience of communities. It is highly confusing, and probably fruitless to expect the student to learn the histories of a number of national states as parallel, but separate and largely unconnected stories. He must be presented, as far as possible, with a single, coherent (though doubtless highly complex) story. We have to seek a community of communities—a group of peoples who have reacted upon one another (and upon the pupils' own national state) for a considerable period of time, and who have been more closely connected with one another than with other

peoples outside the group. The most obvious principle of grouping is geographical; but mere physical contiguity does not necessarily mean ease of communication, and certainly does not of itself prove the existence of a sense of community. There must be other connections as well—religious, cultural, economic or diplomatic, or a combination of these—and these connections must be reasonably close and enduring.

We need not necessarily seek common political arrangements. Few would deny that the peoples of Europe have long formed a genuine community of communities, with close economic and diplomatic ties, a common culture, and a common religion (though with significant variations). They have reacted upon one another, bargained with one another, copied one another, fought one another, for many centuries. That they have never succeeded in achieving political unity, or even in creating enduring machinery for discussion of common problems and disputes, does not matter much for our purpose. The point is that the histories of European countries are inextricably intertwined, and therefore Europe itself has a history, which can be taught and profitably studied. A similar, and even clearer example is supplied by ancient Greece, which certainly formed a very close community of communities despite the jealousies and wars which divided its many city states one from another. The American peoples, on the other hand, do at least possess a common organisation for discussion. But the existence of the Pan-American Union does not necessarily mean that the Americas, as a whole, form a suitable unit for historical study. It shows that many responsible leaders think that all the American states ought to form a community of communities. It is *prima facie* evidence that they may be so regarded as doing so at present. It does not prove that their histories have been closely inter-related—though they may have followed parallel courses—for any considerable time in the past. It is with the past that we, as historians, are concerned. We must, as always, avoid reading into the past our ideas of what we would like to see happening in the present or the future.

In my opinion there are serious intellectual difficulties, as well as difficulties of organisation, in teaching American history on a continental basis. This does not mean, of course, that the attempt is not worth making; but the pattern seems too complicated, the various national histories too separate, the connections between them too tenuous and irregular for easy handling in a history of manageable length. It is a commonplace, of course, that both in colonial times, and in the nineteenth century, many American countries were in far closer cultural and economic contact with Europe, than with each other. In the twentieth century, the growth of the Pan-American idea, the economic preponderance of the United States, the development of air travel, the weakening of Europe by inter-necine war, have all in their different ways fostered the growth of an American community; but these are relatively recent developments, and recent history is always an awkward subject to teach. In any case, the indications are that a weakened and divided Europe is as much a factor in American policy in this century as a strong and confident Europe was in the last. The isolation of the American continent has sometimes been a policy, but since 1492 it has never been a fact. It is perhaps worth inquiring, therefore, whether there are not more realistic

alternatives to general American history. One such alternative might be found in the study of "western" history as a whole. Another possibility is the study of particular regions in the Americas where the histories of several national states can be shown to be closely inter-connected. The Andean states, for example, can be regarded in some senses as a community of communities, possessing in some degree common history. The same is true, though less obviously, of the group Argentina-Chile-Uruguay. Probably the most obvious unit, for our purposes, is the Caribbean area, despite its extreme political fragmentation; for geography has there imposed a certain unit. The Caribbean peoples have many experiences, social, economic and political, in common, and may be said in many ways to participate in a common history. The University College of the West Indies, in Jamaica, has been offering for several years past a course in Caribbean History, which has provoked great interest and lively discussion, particularly among advanced students, and has provided an excellent complement to the narrower histories of individual islands. Caribbean history is full of dramatic incident, which helps to make it attractive also to school-children; and it has the advantage of being the subject of a number of respectable single-volume books, in both English and Spanish.

If general American history is difficult to teach and study because it involves too many separate, imperfectly connected stories, the "regional" approach suggested above is also open to objection, on the ground of its arbitrariness. It picks out a section of the continent, chosen either for historical unity and convenience of presentation, or else for considerations of relevance, because it contains the pupils' own country; it leaves pupils in ignorance of the history of the rest of the continent. A useful compromise—or perhaps better still, a corrective, following on a "regional" study, might be found in the study of a single limited theme, which in its historical development, affected the continent as a whole. The evolution and application of the Monroe Doctrine is an example of such a theme. Another might be the development of the Pan-American idea and the various attempts to give it practical political form. A more difficult and, conceivably, more controversial topic would be the history of relations between Church and State in the Americas. Such studies demand powers of abstraction and a good knowledge of the geographical background, together with ability to understand the requirements of economics and strategy. They can clearly only be undertaken at the university level; but for the able student they are full of interest, and highly rewarding. A final suggestion of this sort, for study at university level, is the history of slavery and the slave trade in the Americas—the nature of plantation slavery, its economic importance, and the obstacles, in comparatively recent times, to its abolition. Experience in the West Indies has shown the importance of facing squarely and objectively the history of an institution which affected all the Americas in some degree and which in some countries left deep scars in social memory. Much of the history writing and teaching of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with its Whig tradition and its complacent assumption of "progress", conveyed an impression that slavery, like religious or ideological war, or the habit of massacring political opponents, was a thing of the unregenerate past, to be made the subject

of brief and tactful allusion, and then forgotten in a world blessed by democracy. Events of the past few decades in other parts of the world have reminded us, however, that man's capacity for corporate wickedness is unimpaired, and that old practices which have been abolished have a way of reviving under new names. We should let history warn us that we are not, by the mere fact of living in America, exempt from the possibilities of cruelty and mass injustice.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The foregoing paper is based upon the UNESCO pamphlet, C. P. Hill, *Suggestions on the teaching of History*, Paris, UNESCO, 1953, in which a useful bibliography may be found; and on the following publications of the History Commission of the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History.

1. *La Enseñanza de la Historia en Mexico*, por Rafael Ramírez Ida Appendini, Paula Gomes Alonso, Jesus Romero Flores, Ricardo Rivera, Rafael García Granados, Eusebio Dávalos Hurtado, Concha Muedra, José Miranda González y Josefina Lomeli Quirarte de Correa.
2. *The Teaching of History in the United States*, by W. H. Cartwright and A. C. Bining.
3. *L'Enseignement de l'Histoire en Haiti*, par Catts Pressoir.
4. *La Enseñanza de la Historia en Cuba*, por Emeterio Santovenia, Antonia Santovenia, Manuel Pérez Cabrera, Fanny Azcuy y Alón, Manuel I. Mesa Rodríguez, Elias Entralgo y María Josefa Arrojo.
5. *La Enseñanza de la Historia en Colombia*, por Miguel Aguilera.
6. *La Enseñanza de la Historia en Venezuela*, por J. M. Siso Martínez y Pedro Váquez.
7. *La Enseñanza de la Historia en la Argentina*, por Leoncio Gianello.
8. *La Enseñanza de la Historia en Honduras*, por Martin Alvarado.
9. *La Enseñanza de la Historia en Nicaragua*, por Carlos Molina Argüello.

Festivals of the Calendar in St. Lucia

BY DANIEL J. CROWLEY

ST. LUCIA'S position between French Martinique on the north and British St. Vincent and Barbados on the south and east is reflected in her history and culture. She changed hands at least fourteen times during the wars between France and Britain in the Caribbean from 1639 to 1803.¹ At that time, when she became a British Crown colony, French influences had gone deep. Creole patois, the language which developed between French-speaking planters and African slaves, had become and still remains the language of St. Lucia.² The Code Napoleon and standard French were employed in the lawcourts as late as 1842.³ Roman Catholicism is the religion of 93.15 per cent. of the population,⁴ and most of the present-day clergy come from the French province of La Vendee.

The population of St. Lucia is overwhelmingly African in origin. In a population of 86,000, there are only about 400 whites and 3,000 Christianized East Indians. It is estimated that perhaps 20 per cent. of the Negroes have some white ancestry.⁵ Thus St. Lucia is uniquely homogenous among West Indian islands, both in racial background and in religion. This homogeneity has never been seriously disturbed by the development of economic, political, or religious enclaves within the community. As a result St. Lucian life has had a consistency and continuity rare in the New World. These forces have shaped a folk community paralleling in many respects the peasant societies of Mediterranean Europe.

During slavery the French planters in St. Lucia did not allow marriage among their slaves, but under the influence of the clergy they encouraged them to be baptised, to receive a modicum of religious teaching, and to attend Mass and family prayers.⁶ That this religious training had significant effects is born out by the fact that during the cholera epidemic of 1854, only 16 years after the effective end of slavery, there were 173 church marriages in Castries, as against 35 marriages in a normal year. 100 of these marriages took place in the two plague months, suggesting that when confronted with the immediate possibility of death, couples living in irregular unions recognized and complied with the Church's stand on the sacramental nature of matrimony.⁷

¹Henry H. Breen, *St. Lucia: Historical, Statistical and Descriptive*. (London: Longman, 1844), p. 46 *passim*.

²West Indian Census 1946, Vol. II, Part H. (Kingston: Bureau of Statistics, 1949), p. xliv. 98% speak patois, and over half also speak English.

³Breen, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

⁴West Indian Census, *op. cit.*, p. xxxix.

⁵Ibid., p. xxiv ff.

⁶Breen, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-213.

⁷Catholicus (Rev. C. Jesse FMI), "En Temps Cholera," *Voice of St. Lucia*, June 12, 1954, p. 4.

Although there were 2,198 whites in St. Lucia at the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, by 1843 their number had dwindled to 1,039, which is still over twice as many as live in St. Lucia today. During this period, the number of coloreds rose from 1,588 to 5,287, and Breen reports that they owned much of the town property, were merchants, doctors, and lawyers, and held such posts as Crown Lawyer and Stipendary Magistrate, and seats on the Legislative Council.⁸ Many of the freed slaves cleared forest land or squatted on unused estate holdings, and developed into "a class of small proprietors and farmers" who also worked in the estate cane fields at crop time.⁹ This pattern still holds to a great extent, with the coloreds living in the towns and controlling much of business and government, while the blacks live on their small holdings and work for extra cash on the estates, which are still owned largely by whites.

Each St. Lucian village is dominated by its church, often built by voluntary local labor.¹⁰ These buildings are simple structures of local diorite with Romanesque detailing and arched windows and doors, and red-painted corrugated iron roofs. The interiors have plain white marble altars, and many votive candles before plaster and cast iron statues of saints, many of whom are unfamiliar to non-St. Lucian Catholics. Throughout the countryside there are many shrines placed at crossroads or at the end of straight stretches of road. These are either large cast metal crucifixes painted luridly with aluminum paint, or small wooden houses with much architectural "gingerbread", and with small but complete altars inside. Sometimes these shrines are used as the goal of a procession or pilgrimage, sometimes for outdoor Mass on some special feast day. More important, they are used daily by the local people for prayers as they pass to and from their villages. These shrines are often small and shabby, but are always decorated with fresh flowers.

Castries, the fast-growing capital of St. Lucia, now has a population of 24,300,¹¹ and dominates the life of the island. It in turn is dominated by its church, Immaculate Conception, a large stone structure that escaped the great fires of 1948 and 1951.¹² Next to the church lies Columbus Square, formerly the Place d'Armes, now a tree-shaded square with benches and a cast iron fountain. It is the scene of most of the festivals and *rites de passage* which mark the year and one's progression from birth to death in St. Lucia.

⁸Breen, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-167.

⁹Lt. Governor Arthur W. Torrens, *Report on the Blue Book*, 4 Jan., 1846, quoted in R. Montgomery Martin, *The British Colonies: British Possessions in the West Indies*, Dev. VIII. (London: John Tallis, no date), p. 125.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 126 ft. Just as in 1846, the church at Soufriere was rebuilt and enlarged recently with voluntary labor of the parishioners.

¹¹*West Indian and Caribbean Year Book, 1954-55*. (London: Thomas Skinner, 1955), p. 287.

¹²Local wags claim that the plan of a sugar mill was accidentally substituted for the original plan during the building of the church. This and other examples of earthquake-proof skeletal cast iron church structures such as the Cathedral of Fort-de-France are sometimes referred to as "Bally Gothic" after the popular Martinique rum.

Life in St. Lucia as elsewhere is structured by periodic celebrations and rituals which mark the passing of time, and the change in age and status of the inhabitants. An investigation of the traditional activities throughout a full year should give some useful insights into values and sanctions, and the way old patterns from various sources have been integrated to give meaning and beauty to the present St. Lucian culture.

The holiday season in St. Lucia is sometimes said to begin with the trumpet fanfare on St. Cecilia's Day, November 22. St. Cecilia, an early Roman virgin and martyr, is the patroness of music and musicians. In her honor, bands of musicians either with stringed instruments or tuned steel oil drums parade through the streets and serenade the homes of their friends. This serenading begins at midnight, and continues throughout the day and evening. Since it is customary for the musicians to be given drinks of rum at each home serenaded, the music grows sweeter and hotter as the day proceeds. The favourite number is "Cecile La Triumphant", originally a French hymn,¹³ but now played in the manner of a fast French one-step. The fanfare mentioned above opens this "theme song," and besides the battered trumpet or saxophone, the band includes a home-made banjo, a cuatro (small 4-stringed Spanish guitar), a set of home-made drums with cymbal and triangle, and shac-shacs. These latter may be either the hollow gourd rattles with handles, commonly called maracas in Latin America, or a traditional St. Lucian form, a foot-long cylinder of metal in which are enclosed a number of pebbles. Another traditional local instrument is the baha, a long metal tube which is blown through. The steel drums were introduced from Trinidad about seven years ago, and have become popular with the town youths.

The next date after St. Cecilia's Day is November 25, the feast of St. Catherine of Alexandria, patroness of old maids. Since old maids are exceedingly rare in St. Lucia, there is no particular celebration, but an old adage states that planting must begin on this day if one is to expect good crops. In practice large scale planting is carried on mostly at the end of the dry season in May and June, but various crops are planted throughout the year, and at least a token planting is begun on St. Catherine's Day.

In 1954, the First Communion of 664 children was also held on St. Catherine's Day in Castries. First Communion is important for any Catholic child, but especially in St. Lucia, where the child enters an age-grade system which he will retain throughout life. The children with whom one makes one's First Communion are thought of as special friends, and ages are often computed by means of the First Communion date. Each anniversary is celebrated, especially the silver and golden jubilees, for which St. Lucians return from New York, Panama, Curacao, Cayenne, or other places where they have settled. A golden jubilee in Soufriere on November 19, 1954 honored 39 jubilarians with a special Mass and party. Each deceased member of the First Communion class was represented by a relative. Some of the old ladies appeared in traditional douillette dresses of gold satin which have been the talk of the community ever since.

¹³Written by Père L. Lambillote.

First Communion is a week-long affair of Masses, processions, and religious instructions. Until recently new white clothes were worn on each day, but now they appear only on the last day. Girls dress in the manner of brides, with elaborate white dresses and veils, and each carries a heavily ornamented white satin or knitted sack purse called a "pachit". Boys wear custom-tailored white suits with short trousers, and a large rosette or bow of white satin fastened to their left shoulder. The long ends of this "epaulet" are embroidered with gold chalices and other designs. Each child carries a candle in the procession, and this together with his "epaulet" or "pachit" is treasured throughout life. The candle is used during the last rites of the Church when the person is dying or burns at the foot of his coffin during his funeral. Thus the child's whole life is bound up with his first responsible religious ritual. After the First Communion, there is a fete for each child, with toasts in vermouth, sheepshead and pumpkin soup, elaborately decorated cakes, and visits and gifts from relatives and godparents.

November 30 is the feast day of St. Andrew the Apostle, patron saint of seafarers, fishermen, and fish vendors, all of whom attend Mass in a body, and hold a rum-drinking fete in a hired "society" hall.

By the beginning of December, the festal mood is in the air. Each Saturday night dances with string or steel bands are sponsored by lodges, friendly societies, churches, rumshops, clubs, and even by private individuals who either give private parties or charge a small admission for the public to dance in their homes.¹⁴

During these weeks steel bands begin their practice parading the streets followed by large numbers of children and adults dancing in the shuffling manner of the Trinidad Carnival "jump-up". On other evenings the Boum-Boums or Bwa-Bwa dancers practice their skits and their drum-and-flute music in the streets, but without the costumes they wear at Christmas and New Years.

On December 5 the village of Anse-la-Rayé celebrated the installation of a new statue of the Virgin in an older shrine known as Lavièj Ma Môroz (the Virgin of Mrs. Monroe).¹⁵ The statue, a small china figure recently brought from France by a priest returning from leave, was carried in state held by six little girls in Communion dresses and silver paper wings riding in the back of an open, flower-decked pickup truck. A procession led down from the road to the shrine, which is a niche carved in the rocky cliff of a promontory, visible to the coasting boats. Afterwards a sermon in patois

¹⁴Some St. Lucians who have lived abroad in more Europeanized places claim the local music is too uneven, and refuse to dance to it. They patronize the several clubs which have jukeboxes stocked largely with mambos of the Perez Prado school. St. Lucian "jazz" dance music has affinities with the "beguine" of Martinique.

¹⁵The orthography used for St. Lucian Cr  ole is similar to the phonemic Laubach system used in Haiti. Each letter has only one sound, pronounced approximately as in English, except as follows: a as in far; i as ee in need; g as in get; j as s in measure; u as o in move;    as aw in lawn;    as in bet;    as a in day. Nasalization is represented by - and elision by - .

was scheduled, but cancelled because of rain and the breakdown of the loud-speaking equipment.¹⁶ The shrine is said to have originally been the gift of one Ma Monrose in thanksgiving for the saving of her child from a sukuyā who had carried him off. According to another local legend, the shrine was built to counteract the evil presence of a lajablès "with eyes like coals" who had killed a small child.¹⁷

In early December the women of St. Lucia begin to make or order their seamstresses to make the necessary dresses for the coming festivities. One middle-class civil servant got eleven new dresses for the season, together with hats, shoes, purses, and other accessories, though six or seven new dresses is more the rule. At least one dress must be red or red print, to be worn at Christmas Mass. These dresses are made from imported patterns, and there is a preference for rich materials such as satin, figured damask, and velvets. Men too get new clothes at this season, and those returning from work abroad can be identified by the extreme cut of their clothes, their nylon shirts and archaic yellow shoes.¹⁸ The occasions for dressing well are Mass and daytime parties, when the light is good enough to see the finery. In the country districts where the subsistence economy limits the amount of cash available, clothes are fewer but just as elegant. However, country dances are so energetic that only old clothes are worn to them.

Houses are decorated with twisted colored paper streamers along the ceilings, and with imported folded paper wreaths, bells, and ornaments hung in the windows. Sometimes hand-made fringes of colored tissue paper are also used. For a Christmas tree, middle class Castrians use branches of the casuarina or Australian pine tree (*Casuarina equisetifolia*), which are hung with German glass ornaments and lighted candles or electric strands. New curtains are required throughout the house. In recent years these have been made mostly of boldly patterned and colored translucent plastic, to counteract the loss of privacy caused by the glass windows which replaced the cooler wooden jalousies in the housing constructed after the 1948 fire.

The 8th of December is the important Feast of the Immaculate Conception, celebrating the dogma that Mary was the only human ever born

¹⁶Only a few priests are proficient enough in patois to preach in it, but some use it with telling effect. The following quotation from a sermon preached a few years ago has become almost proverbial, "Nom sé pay shès, fém sé difé. Si u mété pay shès épi difé u sav sa kay fét." (Man is straw, woman is fire. If you put straw and fire together you know what will happen.)

¹⁷Belief in supernatural beings or "jà gajé" is widespread in St. Lucia. They are thought to be obeah practitioners who have sold their souls to the Devil in return for power to change into giant animals (sukuyā) who steal children and suck their blood, beautiful white women (lajablès) who lure men to destruction, or ti bolom, foetal babies who steal for their masters. For a more extended discussion, see D. J. Crowley, "Supernatural Beings in St. Lucia," *The Caribbean*, Vol. VIII No. 11, June, 1955.

¹⁸Nylon, pronounced "nilō" or "diilō" has come to signify anything new, different, and better. The new ice house in Soufriere advertises "nylon" ice, and nylon starch and nylon peanuts can be had, the latter being candies shaped like peanuts.

without original sin, the desire to do wrong.¹⁹ In 1954 the Marian Year ended on this feast by papal proclamation, and a street procession was held to mark it. Over 600 children and adults took part, each carrying a lighted candle or a lantern of colored paper. The procession was over a mile in length as it wound through the town. Women who are members of the sodalities and confraternities wore their insignia, cloth medallions called scapulars. Men wore the black clothes required for funerals and other formal occasions. The crowds of people who watched from the sidewalks and balconies commented on the presence or absence of prominent persons, and on the elegance or lack of it in the women's clothes. Nearly every prominent Castrian family, white or colored, was represented.²⁰ The procession ended in Columbus Square where a wépozta (repository) or outdoor altar had been set up. This was a framework of boards covered with white cloth, and with a white canopy of baroque design imitating a baldachino. The altar and canopy were decorated with fresh and artificial flowers, and with carpets and candlesticks from the church. As the priest prepared to say Benediction, a heavy rain began to fall, and although a great many people had brought umbrellas, the service was removed to the nearby church. Yearly December 8 is the final day of a novena or nine-day prayer sponsored by one of the sodalities and celebrated by attendance at Mass and the receiving of Communion in a body.

On December 11, an A Bwè ("to drink") celebration was held as Aux Lyons, an isolated village in the hills north of the Dennery Valley. This village is sometimes called "no man's land" because of the allegedly unfriendly nature of the inhabitants, who are said to be practitioners of obeah and illegal rum distilling. The slippery path up the ridge to the village is closed by a bamboo gate, but once proper contacts were made, sincere hospitality was offered. The village is built on a steep, narrow ridge, and the houses are of unpainted wood, but larger than usual. Many of the villagers own small estates, which in part explains their independence.

After a well-cooked meal of Portagi yams, rice, ragout of beef flavored with cloves and spices, and cocoa, the A Bwè began. This is an example of a village fete, in contrast to the island-wide activities previously discussed. There are other fetes limited to only a part of a village, such as the kutumbas of the Nèg Jiné or descendants of Africans in Vieux Fort. Some fetes, like the Kèlè, an African sacrifice in honor of ancestors, has survived in only one family. Unlike these others, the A Bwè is calendrical, always being held as part of the Christmas festivities. Fete is a general term for all parties and festivals, but "plézi" (pleasure) is the preferred term in St. Lucia.

¹⁹The degree of Catholic penetration in St. Lucia can be gauged by the fact that most people understand this particular dogmatic point, and do not misinterpret it to refer to the Incarnation, the conception of Jesus by Mary without human intervention. This latter error is almost as widespread in the Catholic world as outside it, but not in St. Lucia.

²⁰In religious activities of this sort there is almost no pretense to deep emotional or sentimental involvement, in contrast to similar services in Mexico, Italy, or even the United States. The services are seen as pleasant occasions by which one fulfills one's duties with decorum. Dogmatic matters are frequent subjects of conversation, but ethical applications to everyday life are not commonly made.

At about 8 p.m. a crowd of villagers filled the central room of the largest house in the village, as they stood or sat around a long table. The host, a distinguished old man with Napoleon III moustaches, opened the fête with a speech in "Frenchy patois", a macaronic language using many French words incomprehensible to most patois speakers.²¹ The host asked that everyone behave properly, and that each should follow him in contributing "yô shlê" (one shilling) for his share of the cost of the white rum to be drunk. This is drunk neat or "fired" with a chaser of lukewarm water. The idiom for drinking is "wuzé goj mwê" (sprinkle my throat), and although it continued for 12 hours, no signs of drunkenness were noticeable until dawn. All night the singers sang, occasionally freshening their throats with crushed salt, which had been placed on the tables in bowls.

The songs themselves present a problem. There appear to be nearly 70 of them, dealing in a fragmentary way with "the mistress of the inn", "Hoist the flag of King George", or the lament of a father whose pregnant daughter's fiancé would not marry her. Although sung in patois, the texts are so fragmentary that no clear idea of the story can be gained. Each singer will eagerly explain the meaning of the songs, but there is no agreement among them. The singing is in the shâtwèl-chorus pattern of other St. Lucian singing, but there is no musical accompaniment. Although the texts require a great deal more study, they seem to be of 17th or 18th Century origin, possibly introduced by the French and British soldier. Others may be Anglo-Saxon ballads recast in patois.

On December 12 the Catholic Youth Organization in the Village of Dennery staged a snake and mongoose fight, and several other fights were held between Christmas and New Year. The snake, a 5-foot fer-de-lance (*Bothrops atrox atrox*) has long been the scourge of the interior, and accounts for several deaths every year. To combat this pest Governor des Voeux introduced the mongoose (*Herpestes nyula*) from India in 1869 and established a bounty for each fer-de-lance head turned over to the government.²² The mongooses killed many snakes, but rapidly developed a taste for poultry. Both pests are heartily despised by the St. Lucians, so that no humane scruples came into play at this fight. As soon as two mongooses were put in the large cage with the snake, one attacked, was bitten and put out of action. The second mongoose was more cautious, and as the afternoon wore on a total of five mongooses were put in the cage. Each did a little damage to the snake, until he was blinded and had lost much of the flesh of his head. When the snake died he had bitten four of the five mongooses, and they were all killed by the boys in charge. The crowd, who paid 12c.

²¹This form of patois is known and used only by a few people, and only for ceremonial occasions. It has high prestige, being considered more "pure" than comprehensible patois. Many people report with pride that their foreparents spoke "pure" French, and read French books, particularly prayer-books. Today no more than a handful of St. Lucians can speak standard French.

²²Sir George William des Voeux, G.C.M.G., *My Colonial Service*. (London: John Murray, 1903), p. 167. It is said that countrymen took to raising fer-de-lances in captivity to insure a steady income from the bounties.

or 1/- admission, particularly enjoyed the antics of a timid mongoose who squeaked loudly, and acted brave, but ran up the side of the cage when the snake attacked. Each time the snake or mongoose made a feint, the crowd shouted "Egas!" in unison.

"Egas!" is perhaps the most characteristic St. Lucian expression. It derives from "ish" (son) and "garce" (prostitute), but this meaning has been lost. The word now signifies any sharp contact, a blow, a gunshot, an automobile crash, a fall, or even a kiss. Action movies are called "Egas pictures" and the cry rising from the theatre can be heard a mile from Castries on a Saturday night. Some non-patois speakers use "Egas!" almost as a greeting, or to punctuate common speech in the manner of the Trinidadian "E E!" A car accident was avoided when the driver heard a boy shouting "Eeeee . . . !", noticed that he was about to drive into a deep drain, and righted the car before the boy could utter ". . . gas!" This feature of the word is particularly impressive when a St. Lucian foresees a blow in a movie, begin a long-drawn-out "Eeeee" and synchronize the last syllable exactly with the landing of the blow.

On December 13, St. Lucia celebrates Discovery Day together with the feast of St. Lucy, her patroness, a Roman virgin and martyr who is also patroness of Naples. This holiday is based on two mistaken assumptions. There is a legend to the effect that Columbus discovered the island on St. Lucy's Day, but he seems never to have seen the island. Saincte Alouzie or Ste. Lucie was used only as late as 1650 by du Tertre, replacing the Carib name Iouanalao or Hewanora.²³ Customarily this day is celebrated by organized sports, cricket, water polo, basketball, and cock fights, usually arranged by parish priests, private citizens, or government officers. In 1954 there was no official celebration or prizes, and local rumors circulated explaining the replacement of a prominent civil servant as resulting from his overlooking this festival. The particular sport of St. Lucy's Day is walking out on a greased pole suspended from a dock over the water. At the end of the pole is a ham or other prize, the possession of any man who can reach it. Another sport in Choiseul is balloon jumping. Balloons are strung on a string across the road about 6 feet high, varying with the height of children competing. Any child breaking a balloon is awarded a prize.

The annual crafts show of the Choiseul girls' club is traditionally held on St. Lucy's Day, opened by the Administrator. This club under the direction of Miss Helen Victorin has adapted local methods and materials of basketry, and introduced other crafts such as mat-making, passepartout, shell-work, embroidery, and the making of artificial flowers. These articles sell well to middle-class Castrians and to tourists, and are entirely professional in execution. Some young women have become self-supporting through their

²³R. P. du Tertre, *Histoire Generale des Antilles Habitées par les Francois*, 1667-71, vol. i, pp. 158-160, vol. ii, p. 12, and R. Breton, *Dictionnaire Caraïbe-Français* Auxerre, 1665.

crafts while still attending school.²⁴ The club makes and sells decorated sweets and cakes during their fete.

The middle week of December is taken up in last minute window shopping and purchasing of gifts and clothes. In 1954 a new Indian shop opened and caused a sensation by offering Japanese cotton cloth for the low price of 2/- per yard. A Father Christmas appeared in the streets begging for Church charities, and was commonly believed to be a prominent society woman. Another Father Christmas steered the crowds who followed him to one Creole-owned shop. Small boys with slotted tins begged for "The Holy Childhood" but one irreverent citizen checked with Church authorities only to discover that no such organization existed in St. Lucia. During this week the schools close, and the country teachers come into Castries for a 3-day Teachers' Conference. About this time an excursion of Martiniquais arrives to spend the holiday visiting relatives and seeing the sights, such as the Pitons, the volcanic area, and recently rebuilt Castries.

On December 18 all public clubs held dances, and the police force and police band put on a display at St. Mary's College, the local secondary school for boys. This performance was the sort of thing West Indians do particularly well, with the skill and precision less apparent in other aspects of their culture. The calisthenics were imaginatively conceived, involving vary-colored torches swung in precision, elaborate drills of the cadence-count variety, and a finale where the whole group seemed to fall backward over a cliff. The police band played Christmas carols, popular songs, local "calisos", and original compositions by the bandmaster, Joseph Griffiths, the Barbadian who conducted TASPO I, the Trinidad Steel band which toured England in 1951.

On Christmas Eve at 6 p.m. Mrs. Doreen Thorpe, wife of the Administrator, officially lighted the large African tulip tree (*Spathodea campanulata*) which had been strung with colored lights. Father Christmas then climbed down from the tree and distributed balloons to the children in the Square. The Christmas tree stands next to "the gallows tree" where criminals were hung in past times.

Christmas is celebrated with bamboo "kanô" or cannons, sections of bamboo partly filled with kerosene and lighted, giving off a loud report. The fumes from the explosion can be relighted for a second explosion. Other fireworks include torpedoes which explode when thrown down on a hard surface, and "kwapo" (frogs) similar to small connected firecrackers. "Kwapo" are popularly attached to the "pai banan" (banana trash) costumes of the Bwa-Bwa dancers, for the fun of seeing the masquerader tear off his costume to keep from being burned in it. Competitive kite flying also begins at this time, and continues through the dry season. The kites or "savula" (French : cerf-volant) have their strings rubbed with garlic, and slivers of glass or metal fastened to their tails, in hopes that the friction of

²⁴Craft skills have a high prestige as long as they are employed in relatively non-functional activities. The built-up kitchen pottery and beautiful heavy floormats of "vétivé" (khus-khus grass or *Vetiveria zizanoides*) or "jō" (*Eleocharis interstincta*) are made by lower class women and are less prestigious.

the rubbing strings or the sharp edges will cut loose one's opponent's kite. Home-made tops called "topi" are popular with boys, while girls play with "masilé'lé", home-made rag dolls with faces carefully drawn on the smooth cloth heads. Marbles or "zing" and "morel", a variety of hop-scotch are also played and have extensive patois idioms. "Tikitok" played by both sexes, consists of throwing a handful of small smooth pebbles into the air and catching as many as possible on the back of the hand. At this season children make a sweet smelling cologne from the canan tree (*Cananga odorata*) and use it to clean their school slates.

In the week before Christmas, carollers go from house to house singing both English and French carols. The leading group, called the Victoria Amateur Dramatic and Social Club or VADSC, was organized among the poorest children in Castries by Mr. J. Belgrave, who was awarded the M.B.E. for his effort. The singing is in "Sankey" style, with voice ornaments and a dragging delivery in spite of the leader's efforts to keep a lively tempo. The voices are generally good and the several child soloists popular with any audience. Often the carollers are scheduled to arrive during an upper class party and provide a serenade. In this case sweet drinks and cake are provided, and the collection is fairly respectable, both from the host and from passing a plate or hat among the partying people.

During this last week before Christmas small gifts are distributed to poor children by the clergy, and they are given parties under the auspices of the various religious denominations and organizations such as the Girl Guides or the Health Centre. Besides used or inexpensive toys, the children are given home made ginger geer, sorrel, sweet buns, local peppermint candies, and sometimes ice cream. Hampers of food made up by public subscription are distributed by the churches to their poor parishioners, and the Anglicans provide a large holiday dinner for all the poor of the town.

On the night before Christmas Eve a pig is traditionally slaughtered for the making of black pudding, a blood sausage flavored with herbs and garlic, and souse, made from the pig's feet, ears and tail, pickled and served cold with onions and cucumber. The pig's snout is served at "rèvèyò" (French: réveillon), the traditional meal served on Christmas Eve and Old Years Night. On Christmas and New Years Day the traditional meal is ham and fowl served together. Traditional cuisine in St. Lucia compares favorably with any folk cuisine in the world in its variety and subtlety.

On Christmas Eve one of the wealthiest French Creole families of the island gives a party for all their friends and relatives. It begins about 5 p.m. with a children's party during which Father Christmas arrives and distributes presents to each child from around a large imported spruce tree decorated with ornaments and lit with tapers. Then the children are allowed to watch a fireworks display staged by the older boys and servants in the garden, and are then taken home. The rest of the evening the guests drink rum punches or whiskey, and eat an elaborate buffet supper. The guest list includes practically all the local whites and near-whites "even if they never speak the rest of the year", plus British officials, ships' officers, clergy, hospital staff, and other foreigners who are acquainted with the family. A few upper class

light-skinned colored families are represented, but the darker upper class is conspicuously absent, so much so that Castrians refer to the party as "the bêché (white) fete". This yearly party is one of the very few examples of segregation in St. Lucia, and it is anything but rigid. Not only are most of the participants related by blood or marriage, but they are also lifelong companions. Furthermore, the "upper-upper" French Creoles who number under 200 consider all the rest to be of mixed ancestry. For all these overtones and the elegance of the surroundings, the party is always a great success, with folk dancing and the playing of patois children's games. At 11.30 the party breaks up and most of the participants go off to Midnight Mass.

In 1954 Mozart's 12th Mass was sung with distinction by a large choir to an overflowing church. A large crib set or "kwèsh" (French: creche) had been set up in an alcove of the church, and was venerated after Mass. Then traditionally the middle class Castrians, combining religion with pleasure, go dancing at one of the public clubs, particularly Lunar Park on a point overlooking the harbor. The great moment of these dances is the "break-away" usually signaled by the playing of a local "caliso" "Madiana" (a beach and night club in Martinique), "Lagé mwé" (Let me go), or "Bòbdòt" (a local Don Juan). The song is played in short repetitive phrases like the "syncopation" of Trinidad carnival music. The dancers "breakaway" from their partners and each dances an ecstatic solo.

For obvious reasons Christmas Day is spent quietly by most Castrians, but the country people pour into town for the High Mass at 9.30 a.m. This is the best time to see the finest douillettes and the hoards of antique solid gold chains, brooches, and bracelets known locally as "Cayenne gold", because of their source in French Guiana. The douillette is the traditional dress of the Creole community of Martinique, Dominica, Guadeloupe, the Maraval Hills of Trinidad, and St. Lucia. It is said to be derived from the costume of 18th Century Provence; a long, trailing skirt of brightly printed cotton worn looped up over starched and embroidered white petticoats. The simple bodice is partly covered by a small shawl or "foulard", the ends of which are tucked into the belt or toyed with coquettishly. A headtie of contrasting color completes the costume, and in St. Lucia the headtie is sometimes surmounted by a wide-brimmed straw hat. Another type of headtie is the têt kalèndé, pre-tied and expertly pleated, the folds being held in place by a paint made from gum arabic and yellow ochre. This magnificent costume is still worn by many market women and older women in the country, but only the headtie has survived among the younger women.

On the days around Christmas, masqueraders appear in the streets, but since they are more in evidence on New Years, they will be discussed below.²⁵

On Boxing Day, December, 26, many marriages take place. This season is favored because no Catholic marriage can be solemnized during Advent, the month preceding Christmas, nor during Lent which begins in February. Candid St. Lucians also state that since there is so much feasting during

²⁵See below, pp. 23-25.

this season, it is less expensive to put on one more fete than it would be at some other season when people were less surfeited. Marriages usually take place at 4 p.m. and without the nuptial Mass that is normal Catholic practice elsewhere. The reason for such a late hour is that the fete must go on all night, and would be too expensive and possibly too difficult to control if it began in midmorning. This atypical preoccupation with expense reflects the extravagant nature of a wedding fete, which is more often a validation of social and economic position than a sacramental union.

During Christmas week the country people parade from village to village with a Wèn Noèl, a Christmas Queen dressed in a fancy red "African" print dress, and with her court in equally bright and frilly dresses and headties. They are accompanied by a string band, and are given drinks in return for the songs they sing, whether French carols, patois A Bwè songs, or lugubrious Sankey tunes, which seem particularly inappropriate in this festive Catholic setting. Marquis Valley is particularly famous for its Wèn Noèl.

On December 30 the St. Lucia Government Lottery drawing was held in Columbus Square in the presence of the Administrator and government officials, and broadcast over the St. Lucia Experimental Radio. The \$1,000 prize was won by "a poor man" in Dennery, much to everyone's satisfaction. All classes buy lottery tickets, and invest in foreign lotteries such as the Panamanian and the Irish sweepstakes. Most tickets are bought on hunches derived from dreams, and an extensive system of interpretation of dream symbolism for this purpose is in the process of development.

On the Sunday afternoon after Christmas, young children are brought to the churches to be blessed by the priests. This is the celebration of the Fèt Lézinosâ, the Feast of the Holy Innocents, December 28, in honor of the children slaughtered by Herod in his quest for Jesus. The Innocents are the patrons of acolytes and choir boys.

The New Year festivities are at least as important as Christmas in the life of rural St. Lucians. A fattened pig is saved for the first meal of the year, and the finest new clothing is worn at Midnight Mass on Old Year's Night, in hopes that good food and clothing will remain throughout the year. In Castries the Mass is attended by large numbers of country people, so that the Castrians, most of whom have private rented pews, find it necessary to expel intruders if they arrive late. This Old Year's Night Midnight Mass is an innovation of the last five years, said to have been instituted by the Catholic clergy to offset the appeal of the Anglican and Methodist Watchnight services which draw large numbers of the Catholic congregations, particularly the upper class coloreds and French Creoles. Since nearly everyone is in one church or another when Midnight comes, there is little notice taken except the blowing of auto horns or ships' whistles. Services end between one and two a.m. with much ringing of church bells, and the congregations go off to all-night dances at the various clubs. The private Vigie Club, exclusively white, held a fancy dress ball on Old Years Night in 1954. There were also a number of more or less informal house parties where pig's snout and rice, rum punches, sorrel, and coffee were served.

On New Year's morn it is traditional to kiss everyone of the opposite sex that one sees. This pleasant custom begins outside the churches after services, and continues throughout the day, often with humorous results. Another custom of the day is the giving of oranges or white yams to one's friends. This is called "zétwèn" (French: les étrennes) or token gifts. After the orange is eaten, its seeds together with a silver thru'penny are kept in one's wallet or purse to insure a supply of money throughout the coming year. A schooner excursion from St. Vincent usually arrives on this morning, remaining 3 or 4 days.

The greatest number of masquers come out on New Year morning and the following days. Nearly all come from the country, some from as far as Dennery Valley, 12 miles from Castries. The most popular masque is called Boum-Boum or Bwa-Bwa, meaning roughly "nonsense". Masqueraders are exclusively men, but they wear women's red dresses and have headties tied under their chins. Others tie banana trash around themselves so that they look like animated cornshucks. Their headpieces are conical structures of bamboo about $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 ft high, decorated with brightly colored paper streamers, fringe, metallic paper, braid, and ribbons. Another type wears cow horns and a home made cloth or paper mask without cutout eyes and mouth. Most masqueraders do not wear masks, but paint their faces luridly with ruku, lipstick, and house paint. Boum Boums are followed by a band consisting of a flutist, two drummers, and the player of a local cylindrical shac-shac. The flute improvisations tend to overwhelm the melodic line, but most pieces are local "calisos", Trinidad calypsoes, or even Salvation Army marching tunes. The masquers dance a series of steps based on "winin", the characteristic West Indian dance movement involving the rapid tilting of the pelvis backward and forward and from side to side. The apparent symbolism is intensified by pulling the skirt of the dress into a bunch at the front, as in the traditional chiffonette dance of Carriacou. Great individual variation is the rule, and some of the steps resemble calisthenics pushups.

Another traditional masquerade is "jab" (French: diable) or devil. The leader, Papa or Flavien Jab, carries a wooden trident, wears a false beard, a wire tail, and a suit of "crocus" (burlap bagging), all liberally smeared with tar and grease. The jabs wear nothing but ragged short pants, and coat their bodies with tar spotted all over with red spots made from ruku (*Bixa orellana*). They carry no drums or musical instruments, but clap their hands and sing short repetitive refrains such as "Voyè glo ba mwê, mwê ka bwilé" (Throw water on me, I'm burning), or Jwé épi mwê, pa jwé épi fam mwê" (Play with me, don't play with my woman), or "Piti kô nu piti, a lâfè nu ka-alé" (Small as we are small, to hell we are going). They threaten the crowd, receive small gifts of money, then put on a kind of play in an "unknown tongue" with mock prizefights, drilling and saluting, and a ritual of mock death and revival, all of which is heartily enjoyed by the crowd.

A third masquerade, Uncle Sam and Seraphina, has recently become extinct. It was a variant of Moko Jumby, the stilt dancers in this case being dressed in red, white and blue U.S. bunting. Other masques were played in

the past, such as a camel and a two-headed burro, but these have been extinct for many years.

New Years afternoon is spent in the movie theatre seeing an "Egas!" picture, and then into Columbus Square, where tables or booths are set up around the promenade. Each table dispenses some special delicacies, such as "akwa lamowi" (salt fish fritters) or "akwa shu" (grated tannia fritters) being fried in deep fat on a coalpot, sorrel and ginger beer, fruit juices, sweet drinks, ham and corned beef sandwiches in small buns, heavy fruit cakes, peppermint sweets, home made "frozen joy" (popsicles) or delicious soursop, chocolate or coconut ice cream. During this "Tablaplas" (French : les tables à la place), hundreds of children play tag and tumble on the grass inside the Square, people promenade carrying children on their shoulders, mothers breastfeed their babies, the police direct traffic away from the surrounding streets, and a good time is had by all. One is reminded of French street fairs and park life. Older children go on special bus rides around Castries and out as far as Gros Islet, for fares from 2c. to 12c., in "buses" made by converting large trucks with wooden benches or planks. Each bus has a name, such as "Happy Landing", "Merci Dieu", "The Eagle Flies Again", or "Lucilla of Mon Repos". The children sing Trinidad calypsos or popular songs, or chant, "Woy Woy, ki bô shofè" (Oh Oh, what a good driver). Recently they have developed a repertory of insults, catcalls, and clever if libelous rhymes, such as "Woy Woy, du so, i pa ni asé" (Oh Oh, do so, we haven't had enough ride), or "Bòbè, chiê lawui" (The policeman is a street dog), "Bòbè, waya wjye" (The policeman is a rusty wire), or "Ankojé ankoké" (Anco J is the name of a truck, "ankoké" is to have sexual intercourse). Tablaplas continues each day of the New Year holiday except Sunday.

After the big fetes of New Years, St. Lucia is quiet until Carnival. Fêt léwa, the Feast of the Kings, or Epiphany is celebrated only with a Mass. There are country bélè and dèle débòt dances, and in town the clubs have string band music and dances every Saturday night. There is no blessing of the throats on St. Blaise's Day, February 12, though this Catholic custom would undoubtedly be popular in health-conscious St. Lucia. St. Valentine's Day is celebrated by dances given by such middle class groups as the Girls' Recreation Club or the Physical Culture Club. Valentine cards are sent only by foreigners or acculturated upper class people.

From January through March fields are prepared for the major planting which begins at the end of the dry season. Field work is often done by "ku dmâ" (French: coup de main), the cooperative work group known throughout the West Indies and in Africa.²⁶ The owner of the field provides food, rum, and a drummer, and the hands sing work songs to help them work in unison.

Carnival, beginning the weekend before Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, is in its present form a recent importation from Trinidad. In the distant past Carnival was celebrated with masque dances, street masking, and floats on carriages, wagons, or trucks. Music was provided by string bands

²⁶M. J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*. (New York: Harper, 1941), p. 161 ff.

or by beating biscuit tins. In the 1920's there was a mythical Carnival King called "Vaval" and a Queen was chosen in a contest, but in the last thirty years observance of Carnival had become desultory, and the old forms of masque almost extinct. In 1947 the steelband adopted from Trinidad first came out in Carnival. With it appeared the characteristic "jump-up" shuffling dance steps, and "hot shirts" for men and "hot skirts" for women, both made of bright "African" prints. One prominent civil servant appeared in a black shirt appliqued with orange and red flames, the effect intensified by flashlight bulbs arranged throughout the design and operated by hidden batteries. There is still some masking, and recently steel bands and other groups have come out as Turks, matadors, convicts, the Kon-Tiki Expedition, gladiators, and the like. Individual masques included Sir Walter Raleigh, native St. Lucia dress (douillette), a gardener and an anthurium lily, a Hawaiian, various ragged "old masques", and a whole range of costumed children. There are no traditional masques such as found in the Trinidad Carnival, but a group of female fishvendors danced the "plait-the-ribbon" or maypole dance (in Trinidad called sebucan) for the Coronation Carnival. Sometimes the New Years Masquerades turn out at this time also. The road march of 1955, another institution borrowed from Trinidad, was Kitchener's "Trouble in Arima". After the street parading and the Queen contest, the crowds adjourn to clubs for serious dancing.

The traditional food of Shrove Tuesday, the last day of Carnival, is "bèyé" (bathed), a fritter made of flour, spices, eggs, and sugar, and fried or "bathed" in deep fat, and served rolled in powdered sugar.

Ash Wednesday is marked by Mass and the distribution of consecrated ashes on the foreheads of the congregation. In Castries Téwé Bwa-Bwa, the Burial of Carnival is occasionally celebrated. This is a mock funeral of Vaval, with an effigy placed in a child's coffin and carried with great pomp to the cemetery. The "mourners" wear the customary white-and-black clothes of funeral processions, but the music is carnivalesque. Téwé Bwa-Bwa is not widespread in St. Lucia, but it is the central activity of the "black and white Carnival" of Martinique, and is also known in Dominica.

Lent is rigidly observed in St. Lucia, with strict fasting and abstinence from meat on Wednesdays and Fridays, though this is not particularly difficult in a fish-eating community where meat is scarce. The country people customarily come into the villages for the Way of the Cross processions each Friday. After the service they go to the fishermen's beach to buy flying fish, then at the height of its season. These fish are cleaned and salted in buckets on the spot by the purchasers, and then carried home and dried on a line as an inexpensive substitute for the popular "lamowi" or salt codfish from Canada or Scandinavia. The salt used in this process is sold on the beach in small chunks, just as it came from Anguilla or St. Martin, and is then crushed in mortars. People often walk from Saltibus to Choiseul, a distance of 7 miles, just to buy flying fish.²⁷

²⁷Farmers from the interior commonly come to the coast in all seasons to trade their produce for fish. At Anse Tulu there is a year-round barter system called "toché" or tolod", where breadfruit and ground provisions are traded for fresh fish.

The dry season or "Cawèm" (French: Careme) is another name for Lent. Mi Cawèm, the middle of Lent, is an occasion for a party, paralleling the mood of Laetare (Rejoice) Sunday in the Church liturgy, when the prayers of the Mass foreshadow the coming joy of Easter. The Mi Cawèm party is often held on St. Joseph's Day, March 19, the feast day of the Sisters of St. Joseph de Cluny who teach in the Convent in Castries, and in other girls' schools down the coast. It is also the day of fête for carpenters, joiners, and cabinet makers, since St. Joseph was a carpenter. St. Joseph's Day is First Communion Day for the Convent girls every second year. St. Patrick's Day, February 17, is celebrated by the Irish nuns, and by the Presentation Brothers who teach at St. Mary's College, since St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland.²⁸

On Palm Sunday, the last Sunday of Lent, the country people come to town to receive the blessed palm distributed at Mass. The palm is not braided into catstair according to European custom, but is left whole and used to decorate the shelf or "shapèl" which in every home holds a small statuette of Lavièj, and a small glass of water and oil with a floating wick that is kept burning throughout the year "to keep me in light".

Every Sunday after Mass the men of the parish tend to gather in rum-shops for a session of camaraderie and rum drinking known as "fêt lézom". On Palm Sunday there is a special procession for men, after which the fêt lézom is particularly well attended. Rumshops exist in the littlest settlements and often have imaginative names such as "Sardusingh's Christian High Light Saloon" in Dennery.

The services of Holy Week follow the full liturgical pattern, with Tenebrae each evening, and a Solemn High Mass on Holy Thursday. From the time the last bell of the Sanctus is rung during this Mass, until the first bell of the first Mass on Holy Saturday morning, no one bathes or goes into the water. There is a widely held local belief that anyone who goes swimming on Good Friday will be drowned. Several years ago two newly-arrived priests all unknowingly scandalized their parishioners by "taking a sea bath" on Good Friday. At the sound of the first bell on Holy Saturday, men and boys jump in the sea or bathe at standpipes, while women bathe at home.²⁹

On Good Friday during the Mass of the Presanctified, obeisance to the Cross is made. The statues are covered in purple cloth during this last week,

²⁸Omer Engelbert, *The Lives of the Saints*. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1951), pp. 233-236. The veneration of national patron saints often reflects the excesses of nationalism. Ecuador is dedicated to the Sacred Heart, and the Virgin has recently been designated Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of Venezuela. In the United States the mid-Lenten party is often held on St. Patrick's Day if the Bishop is of Irish ancestry, on St. Joseph's Day if he is German, and suppressed altogether as "breaking Lent" if he is neither.

²⁹St. Lucians have many curious beliefs connected with water. While warm from exertion one must never drink water, particularly cold water. This "âpwidâs" (imprudence) results in a "fwédi" (cold) which describes anything from a head cold to syphilis, though cold milk causes gonorrhea. Swimming while warm results in cramps and drowning, or 20 years later in elephantiasis, arthritis, or locomotor ataxia. Crossing water in a boat or even over a bridge is equally fatal, as is drinking water while ironing.

and those nearest the Blessed Sacrament are changed to white cloth after Mass. On this day women wear only white, black, gray, or mauve (pinkish-lavender) dresses, just as at a funeral.

During the last part of Lent boys make "wawas", a kind of noise-maker made by fastening a cylinder of resin, "bwé", to the end of a stick between two discs of cardboard. A piece of horsehair is fastened around the cylinder, and the other end of the horsehair fastened to a matchbox decorated with colored metallic paper. When this bull-roarer is twirled it gives out a sound described as "wawa" or "rara". Other noisemakers are made with rachets cut from cans, or with wooden clappers in imitation of those used by acolytes on Good Friday in place of bells, which are proscribed.

The traditional meal of Good Friday includes salted salmon, mackerel, or herring, tannia cakes, a salad of carrots and lettuce, rice, and tamarind jam. Large flat oval ginger cakes are made with scalloped edges, and called "penny-apiece (creole: pânepis from French: pain d'espice, spice bread.) Though in Trinidad their name is "kuvèti po sham" (chamber pot cover) because of their shape.

Another popular custom of Good Friday is divining one's future by dropping the white of an egg newly laid on Good Friday morning into a glass of water that has been warmed in the sun. The egg white takes a shape which is then interpreted, an altar or a church foretelling marriage, a ship a voyage, a coffin death.³⁰

On Holy Saturday after the bathing described above, the priest blesses the Easter water and baptismal font. Lent ends at noon, and the favorite foods one had given up are eaten with new appreciation.

Easter is not particularly important in St. Lucia. After Easter High Mass, there are family dinners and evening parties, but no traditional cuisine. There are no Easter bunnies, baskets of decorated eggs or Easter bonnets, though candy eggs are sold in some stores, and a few upper class people send Easter cards.

May Day is celebrated in characteristic St. Lucian fashion, with a special Mass attended by the Seamen and Waterfront Workers Union and the St. Lucia Workers Union representing the sugar workers and laborers. Afterwards the unions hold a fete in the Workers' Union Hall in The Conway, the waterfront district of Castries. A subscription dance also held in The Conway lasts all day and night. In the past Shuwal Bwa Dadi (Daddy's Wooden Horse or merry-go-round) made its appearance on May Day, but since the retirement

³⁰There are several other methods of divining: by opening a Bible, missal or Imitation of Christ at random and reading the first text one sees; by binding a key tightly into a Bible, with only its head exposed, supported by the right index fingers of two people—if it swings right, your answer is yes, if left, no; to know whom one will marry, suspend a wedding ring on a hair or thread over a glass of water and speak the names of likely candidates—when the ring hits the glass, the name being spoken is the intended.

of Daddy, the Shuwal Bwa no longer tours the villages, but is set up permanently at Mon Repos. The prices for rides are given in a song:

Shuwal Bwa Dadi	...	... Daddy's Wooden Horse
Ti mamay dé su	...	... Little child ha'penny
Gwâ mun kat su	...	... Big people penny
Fam mayé dé go	...	... Married women two pence
Bachila si su	...	... Bachelors penny ha'penny
Ma Foblas twa go	...	... Mrs. Foblas [a fat woman] 3 pence.

Mother's Day is celebrated only by acculturated townspeople, and as yet Father's Day is not marked. On May 15 the teachers celebrate the feast of their patron, St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle, founder of the teaching order of the Brothers of Christian Doctrine. They attend Mass in a body and have a party afterwards.

On May 24, Empire Day is celebrated as a public holiday. The Administrator addresses the crowd from a kiosk in Columbus Square, on which sit the Administrator's family, members of the Legislative and Executive Councils, their families, and heads of departments. Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Brownies, Cubs, and other organizations perform a "march past" and school children sing patriotic songs. Later the children toast the Queen in aerated drinks or lime squash, and eat buns of sweet bread, cakes, and sweets provided by the government.

On the last Sunday in May, children bring offerings of flowers, "Ofwâ déflè", to the church during the afternoon Vespers and Benediction.

The Feast of Corpus Christi, June 17, is both a civil and religious holiday. Three wépoztwa or repositories are built in Castries. These outdoor altars similar to that described for the end of the Marian Year³¹ are decorated with white cloth, fresh and artificial flowers, ferns and creepers. The wépoztwa of St. Isidore, patron of farmers, is also decorated with choice vegetables and fruits, and with large, twisted loaves of bread originally supplied by the late Ma Gonzague, a baker whose establishment was near the wépoztwa. A large procession follows the priest, who says Benediction at the three wépoztwa, which are dedicated to St. Isidore, Lavièj, and Sakwé Kè. The procession is known as "the fashion show" because in spite of clerical opposition each woman feels she must have a new dress and accessories for this occasion, and traditionally they must all be of the same color, dress, hat, shoes, purse, and gloves.³²

The Corpus Christi celebration in Soufrière is in the imaginative tradition of Latin Catholicism. The village is situated along a curved beach and its deep harbor is surrounded by jagged peaks, particularly Petit Piton rising 2,481 ft. sheer from the water. Here the wépoztwa is built on a group of five pirogues tethered together. The priest and acolytes board this float

³¹See above.

³²Cf. Breen, *op. cit.*, p. 183. ". . . . dress and devotion are the order of the day—the all-engrossing topics of female society the greatest *dévote* is often the greatest coquette".

and say Benediction as the flower-decked wépoztwa is allowed to drift out from the beach. Its relationship to the faithful on the shore reflects Christ's instructions to boatmen to push His boat off from shore so that He could speak more satisfactorily to an assembled crowd. When the service is over, the wépoztwa is drawn back to shore and disassembled.³³

On June 29, St. Peter's Day, the fishermen of the community have their fête. In the fishing villages of The Conway and Soufrière the priests bless the fishing boats, which are decorated with flowers for the occasion. After a Mass for St. Peter the fishermen and fish-vendors parade through the streets in hired taxis and hold a party in a rented lodge hall.

On the Queen's official birthday, the second Thursday of June, there is a parade around the Square by the police constabulary, cadets, scouts, guides, and other groups, after which some of the adults adjourn to private homes to drink the Queen's health.

July 16, the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, is the fête of the Confraternity of Mt. Carmel, a religious organization for women, dedicated to visiting the sick and poor, distributing alms, and having Masses said for deceased members. This is the usual time for joining the organization, or celebrating the anniversary of one's joining, just as one celebrates birthdays, wedding anniversaries or First Communion anniversaries. In processions this group wear their brown scapulars around their necks, but otherwise under their clothes.

St. Christopher's Day, July 25, is the feast of chauffeurs, bicyclists, and taxi drivers. They attend Mass in a body, then spend the day driving their cars and bicycles through the streets in a procession, honking their horns continuously. They have the usual rum fête in a lodge hall. St. Christopher medals and other small religious figurines are much in evidence in St. Lucian cars.

St. Anne's Day, July 26, is the feast of the laundresses.³⁴ The connection between St. Anne and laundry is not quite clear, but as the mother of Mary and grandmother of Jesus, she is venerated in France as the perfect "Mère Chretienne" and patroness of housewives and household tasks. In a community where only very poor women do not employ at least one servant, it is easy to see how the saint of household tasks could become the saint of servants.³⁵ The laundresses are too poor to rent cars for a parade, but they have a fête in a hall in the Monkey Hill or Morne Dudon neighborhoods.

³³In the evening after this service in 1955, a severe fire broke out and leveled nearly half of Soufrière's buildings.

³⁴There is much variation in the veneration of patron saints. St. Clare is patroness of washerwomen, St. Martha of laundresses, and St. Zita of maidservants and housekeepers. Engelbert, *op. cit.*, p. 500.

³⁵Great prestige is derived from hiring servants, and they are much discussed. In an office hiring only one office boy, he will be referred to as "my staff". For a similar attitude in Trinidad, see Lloyd Braithwaite, "Social Stratification in Trinidad", *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 2, Nos. 2 and 3, Oct., 1953, pp. 145-146.

In the rainy season from June to September, small boys make "boats" from matchsticks and sail them in the flooded gutters, called "kanal" or drains. Slingshots or "katapul" are also popular in this season, being made from a crotched branch and innertube, and used mainly for shooting birds and each other with pebbles as ammunition. St. Lucian blackbirds are supposed to pray as follows: "Bô Dié, Bô Dié, pwézèvé mwê, wosh, fizi, katapul, situ ti Nèg". (Good Lord, Good Lord, preserve me from rocks, guns, slingshots, especially little Negroes). Another kind of weapon, the seed popgun or "pòfgon" is made in the rainy season. A piece of female bamboo from 4 inches to 2 feet in length is cut, and a slightly longer stick fitted into the hollow like a piston in a cylinder. A seed, small fruit, or wad of wet paper or cork is rammed through the cylinder, so that when a second seed or wad is rammed through, the first is ejected with a loud noise.

St. Lucian men and boys are excellent swimmers, and make a sport of cavorting around incoming vessels and diving for coins. To make it possible to stay far from land without undue effort, boys use a float made from a section of the trunk of a "bwa flâ" or balsa tree (*Ochroma lagopus*). It is also sometimes sat upon and used as a raft.

Pentecost or Whitsunday, the locally-preferred term, is a moveable feast occurring 50 days after Easter. Whitmonday is a civil holiday given over to picnicking, sea bathing, and sports. Picnics are called "mawòn" in patois meaning "wild".³⁶ In late years it has become a custom for St. Lucian middle class people to make a schooner excursion to Martinique on this holiday. Although Martinique is only 22 miles away, and many St. Lucians have relatives there, little mutual intercourse has developed besides occasional smuggling, visits of officials, and wholesale purchasing of St. Lucian fishermen's catches.

On Emancipation Day, first Monday in August, similar excursions operate to Kingstown, St. Vincent. In the list of St. Lucian civil holidays,³⁷ this day is merely called "Bank Holiday", and there is little formal ceremonial activity, although it would seem to be by far the most significant day of the year for a community that was born in Emancipation.

The Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, August 15, is not a holy day of obligation in St. Lucia as it is in the U.S. This most recently proclaimed dogma has been traditionally celebrated with a High Mass, long before the dogma was proclaimed.

August 30 is the feast of St. Rose of Lima, first saint to be born in the New World, and hence popular with New World missionaries.³⁸ In St. Lucia there has existed for at least 150 year a curious kind of moiety. The

³⁶Probably derived, like the English "maroon" from the Spanish word for runaway slave, "cimarron", which originally designated a mountain peak. The term was used to designate a picnic in English-speaking Nassau as early as 1824. Miss Hart, *Letters from the Bahamas Islands written in 1824*, Philadelphia, 1827, Richard Kent, (Ed.) (London: Culmer, 1948), p. 27.

³⁷West Indies and Caribbean Year Book, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

³⁸The former Carib mission of St. Rose in Arima, Trinidad, still has a festival on her feast day, and devotion to her is extensive in Mexico and the American Southwest.

population from Governor to country peasant has been affiliated with either Sosété Lawoz or Sosété Lamagrit. Membership is through "feelin" a preference for the rose flower, the symbol of Lawoz, or for the marguerite (bachelor's button globe amaranth, gromphrena), the symbol of Lamagrit. On the feast of St. Rose, Lawoz holds a "gwâ fêt", with the King, Queen, Princess, Chief of Police, Soldiers, Matrons, Nurses, Pages, and other society dignitaries parading through the streets to and from Mass wearing magnificent robes and carrying gold-emblazoned flags. In the evening there is a ceremony of homage to the "royalty", a grand march, a dance, and plenty of cakes and drinks. The special lavic dance form is called "mâpa", danced in a circle and sung by a shâtwèl and the dancers. Both organizations hold "seances" or singing practices, where the songs praise their flower and deride the opposite organization and its flower. The positions of "royalty" go to those who can afford to buy the necessary costumes, but they must also be popular with the rank and file. Funds to hire the hall and pay for entertainment are obtained by subscription from members and "patrons" from the wealthier classes, and from fines levied for rude behaviour, failure to give "royalty" its due, smoking without permission, smoking licences, or taking sweets or bags of peanuts suspended from cords from the ceiling. These fines are levied by a "magistrate" in a mock court after the offender has been arrested by a "police". At various times in their long histories, the societies have been at odds with both Church and State for quarrelling, riots, and extravagance. But conversely nearly all Governors and prominent citizens have affiliated with one of the societies, many of them actively. Lawoz built the steeple of the church in Vieux Fort, and gave some of the cloth-of-gold vestments in Castries. In recent years interest has flagged, but organizations still exist in each village.³⁹

September 8, the Nativity of the Virgin, is the feast of the Children of Mary Sodality, "Afâ Mawi", an organisation similar to the confraternity, but wearing blue scapulars and blue satin baldrics. They do works of mercy give alms to the sick poor, and teach illiterate country children their catechism in preparation for First Communion. They usually make a three day retreat including Mass attendance, prayers and meditation, and sermons, ending with a High Mass on this feast day.

Thanksgiving Day, a legal holiday usually celebrated on the first Monday of October, is a harvest festival, even though there are not the restricted planting and harvesting cycles known in temperate zones. The Catholics sing a Te Deum at Thanksgiving Mass, and the Anglicans and Methodists give harvest festivals and bazaars where they sell flowers, needlework, and provisions contributed by their congregations, the proceeds going toward the support of their schools. A dance is usually held in the evening. Country dances at this season specialize in the "pikâ" danced in a circle of alternating men and women.

On October 17, Lamagrit gives a gwâ fêt on the feast of its patroness, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. October 18 is the feast of St. Luke, patron

³⁹Breen, *op. cit.*, p. 191 ff., and Harold F. C. Simmons, "The Flower Festivals of St. Lucia", *The Voice of St. Lucia*, August 27, 1953.

or nurses, who celebrate by attending Mass in a body, and then hearing a lecture. On October 25, the feast of Sts. Crispin and Crispinian, the shoemakers and cobblers have a fête in honor of these Roman martyrs who were shoemakers.⁴⁰

Hallowe'en is not celebrated with pranks in St. Lucia, but such groups as the Physical Culture Club, Girl Guides, or Ex-Service Men give dances. With the end of October, the Miserere which is sung after High Mass every Sunday during the hurricane season is discontinued. The poem on the hurricane season is:

June, too soon
July, stand by
August, come it must
September, remember
October, all over.

November opens with All Saints Day, when each family cleans the family graves, whitewashes the copings or stones, replaces the conch shells that cover the mound, and refresh the painted lettering on the wooden crosses that mark the graves. Colored paper wreaths and fresh flowers decorate the graves, and some families arrange lighted candles on them. This beautiful custom has no known significance in St. Lucia beyond "it for the dead". It is more widespread in Martinique and Trinidad.

Remembrance Day is a civil holiday celebrated on the Sunday before November 11, the armistice of World War I, unless another date is proclaimed from Whitehall. The "Last Post" is blown during the Requiem Mass of Remembrance, after which wreaths are laid on the war memorial in Columbus Square. After a marchpast by police, ex-service men, scouts, guides, and other groups, the ex-service men are invited to the Police Canteen for drinks and informal speeches.

November 9, Peacemaker's Day, is dedicated to Edward VII. Little festivity marks the day, though the Methodists have a church bazaar, and Dominica sometimes sends a schooner excursion.

The month of November is dedicated to the Poor Souls in Purgatory. St. Lucian country people syncretize their African and European traditions by holding "kònt" (story) dances in honor of dead ancestors during this month. "We keeping this pleasure for all deads". The kònt is held in a temporary tent outside a village, so that the 10 p.m. deadline on drum playing can be ignored. A shâté or male shâtwèl sings in a loud voice an improvised topical song, beginning each line with "I di, Woy. . ." (He or she says, 'Oh . . .) or "I di mwè wè" (He or she says, 'I see . . .). One or two

⁴⁰The popularity of hagiolatry in St. Lucia has led to the following jokes about patron saints: St. Francis de Sales is the patron of auctioneers; St. Joseph Cupertino (cup-of-tea-no?) of afternoon teas; St. John Damascene of theatrical performances; and St. Pascal Baylon of cricketers. Authentic patrons are hardly less curious, e.g. The Annunciation as feast day of the news dealers. There are patron saints for old clothes dealers, mountain climbers, clowns, jugglers, drunkards, prostitutes, thieves, jockeys, playing card manufacturers, plumbers, makers of precision instruments, and for obtaining a good lodging while travelling. Engelbert, *op. cit.*, p. 499 ff.

drummers beat out a complex, erratic rhythm against the shâté, and the chorus by the crowd is made up of the most prominent phrase of the song. Topics cover all aspects of village life, often by subtle allusion and suggestion. As the shâté completes his kônt, he specifies the number of couples who are to dance, usually 1 to 4. The dance mimes the words of the kônt in an imaginative and often derisive way, and the steps, though varying broadly, are built around rapid and complex crossing of the legs by the men, and "winin" by the women. The variety, humor, and skill exhibited in the kônts and other country dance forms suggest that they are St. Lucia's most important artistic expression, worthy of much more study. The "solo", a competitive display of footwork between couples in another popular dance form of the November-December season.

The yearly cycle of socio-religious activities is varied and extended by anniversary celebrations of birthdays, First Communions, weddings, and confraternity affiliations. Throughout life there are the Catholic *rites de passage* of Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, Matrimony or Holy Orders (two local Creole priests to date), and Extreme Unction at the time of death. The pattern of wakes includes festivities at the night of death, the 9th, 40th, and year anniversaries, each with hymn singing, folktale-telling, riddling, and sometimes dancing, and carefully graded periods of mourning symbolized in clothing. Each year there are special events, religious activities such as those connected with the Marian Year, and civil holidays proclaimed by the government to mark special occasions. The tenor of life is thus one of order, pleasure, and anticipation, in spite of the serious problems occasioned by poverty and isolation. St. Lucians in accommodating their ancient West African patterns to the capacious structure of traditional folk Catholicism have created an island of piety, certainty, and innocent merriment in a sea of trouble.

Launching a Schooner in Carriacou

BRUCE PROCOPE

AFTER six years of sailing, *Blue Nose Mac*, a schooner belonging to Dean MacFarlane of Windward in Carriacou ran aground on one of the many reefs off the Windward coast in May, 1952. Efforts were made to refloat her but without success and after twenty-nine days of unsuccessful efforts to save her she was stripped and abandoned.

The *Rival Dean* which replaced her was built from a draft made by Jossie Crompton from a verbal description by Dean MacFarlane of the kind of vessel he wanted. The material salvaged from the *Blue Nose Mac* valued at \$10,000, together with mahogany purchased from and given by the Government, was assembled at Erstine Roberts' shipyard. Leo Crompton, the carpenter, was then shown the draft and asked to build the vessel. The timbers were made of white cedar and mahogany and the rest of the vessel of pitchpine. The keel was of greenheart. The spars were pine trees pared down to shape. Six inch galvanize iron spikes, wooden spikes, pitch, tar, oakum and iron nails were also used in the construction of the vessel. The spars, spikes, oakum and pitchpine were imported from Canada.

The keel of greenheart was brought by schooner to Carriacou from British Guiana. It consisted of a single Greenheart log and arrived already shaped. It was 44 ft. long, 6" wide and 12" deep. It was placed on blocks of wood in the shipyard. The stem and stern post were then attached by bolts to the keel and held upright by chocks. The two centre timbers fashioned by the carpenter's judgment were then bolted to the keel and similarly chocked. Next the transom and then the bow frame similarly fashioned by the carpenter were bolted to the keel and ribbons (i.e., pieces of cord) were run from bow to stern at about deck level on both sides of the schooner. The carpenter then made patterns of the remaining timbers from pitchpine boards. These are called moulds. The moulds were fitted upright at the place where the timbers were to be put and afterwards taken down, put on the ground and used for shaping the timbers which were then fitted to the keel and chocked. The keelson (a plank shaped to fit over the timbers along the whole length of the keel) was then put down and bolted through the timbers on to the keel. Next the beams and stanchions were installed and attached to the timbers by knees and flows. The stanchions and beams were arranged according to the position planned for the holds and hatches. Then the deck was floored among other things to keep the hold of the vessel clean. After this the planks and boards were fixed on to the schooner and the schooner was caulked. The joint where the stem meets the keel was caulked by boring holes right through both keel and stem at the points where they met, driving wooden pins into the holes, splitting the head of each pin and caulking the split head of the pin. The water line is averaged and is usually 1 to 2 ft. above the widest part of the bilge of the schooner.

By Monday, 7th September, 1953 the schooner had been built and painted, and lay on the beach at Windward, her bows facing east towards the reef and supported by chocks. Her bottom is tarred up to the water line. Above the water line she is painted dark grey with a yellow band about six inches wide painted at deck level along both her sides from bow to stern. The bulwarks are painted white and the rail green. Apart from the jib-boom imported from Canada complete with stays and the port and starboard guides, none of the gear has been fitted.

The eve of launching is a *helping day*. No one is paid and people come from all parts of the district to lend a hand with the work to be done. The owner provides rum, wine and food and this provision of food for those helping is called a salaca, saraca or maroon. The owner makes a salaca for launching.

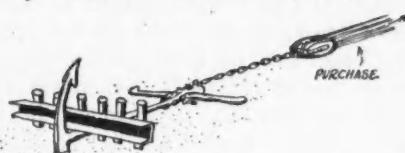
Monday, 9.00 a.m.

The general atmosphere is one of urgency, the owner complaining about the work still to be done such as caulking and tarring, and urging all who have come into the shipyard to help. Presently a man starts to caulk the galverstrow. Two men, one with a hoe and one with a shovel, clear and level the ground under and in front of the starboard side, the side on which she will be cut down. This is to ensure that the wares will be level when laid.

Gifts, including three fowls and a bottle of rum arrive at the shipyard. Presently the fowls are bled on the vessel, their necks are severed and they are thrown as they bleed against the keel one at the bow and two at the stern. Two men follow the fluttering fowls, with rum and water, and, as the fowls thresh about, they throw it on them.

Meanwhile the hauling preparations for launching are being made. Previously three anchors had been set—one on the reef 100 yards from shore directly in front of the schooner, another 15 yards from shore in the same

line as the first, and about 12 to 15 yards to starboard of this, a third. The first of these anchors is the main anchor which weighs about 600 lb. The flue has been partly buried in the reef and an iron bar about 6 ft. long placed



SECURING OF MAIN ANCHOR IN SEA BED

parallel to the shore slightly above the bottom of the side of the flue which is nearer shore. Behind the iron bar on the shore side five pickets of iron mangrove 5' 6" to 6' long have been driven into the reef with mallets or heavy blocks of wood. The top of the anchor is visible above the surface for about 8" and so are the tops of the pickets for about 8" to 10". The third anchor is called the starboard luff and weighs about 500 lb. as does the second anchor. It was originally planned that a port luff should be placed in the sea but this was never done. The method of securing the main anchor is shown in above.

9.30 a.m.

Five men in a small boat take a chain to one end of which is attached a length of rope and carry it to the main anchor paying out the rope to four men standing on the shore as the boat moves out to sea. Two men on shore prepare a purchase with a length of 1" rope. The purchase is made of the 1" rope and two blocks each having two shives. The rope is passed twice through two blocks, one of which is hooked to a rope tied to a coconut tree and the other block is placed on the beach near the surf.

The chain is attached to the main anchor and the small boat returns to shore, the men throwing the chain into the sea as they come shoreward. The rope which is attached to the chain is then secured to the hook of the block that was put near the surf and twelve men pull on the free end of the rope on the purchase. This rope on which they pull is called the fall. Pulling on the fall continues until the rope and chain are taut. This is done to stretch the chain.

Five men remove the purchase from the rope attached to the chain and secure that rope to a coconut tree. This purchase is taken out in the boat and one end attached to the chain while the other is brought back to the shore with the aid of another purchase which has been made meanwhile.

Next, work starts on the rollers, which are being made from rough logs of dogwood, and greenheart, &c. The roller is made by axing the log until it is roughly a square then cutting the edges so that it becomes hexagonal and so further cutting and trimming the edges until the log is roughly round. It is then planed.

11.10 a.m.

Another bale of rope is stretched. At about noon, the strapping of the vessel begins. Cable is run around the girth of the vessel on the ground with one end formed into an eye. A length of rope is then attached at one end to a wooden cleat on deck and passed down and under the cable and up and under the cleat on both sides of the vessel until the cable is raised from the ground and is suspended around the vessel. A rope is then passed down from the deck through the rudder case and secured to the strap and the deck end is secured to a cleat. The rope supporting the strap is called the hangars and the operation of supporting the strap by the hangars is called the bridling. Several temporary cleats are made for the purpose of bridling by nailing pitchpine laths to the top timbers.

1 p.m.

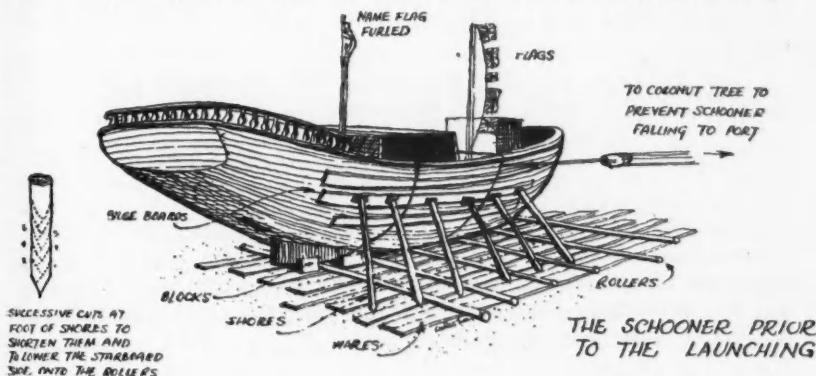
Food is served by the women in pitch-oil tins and trays. The meal consists of dried pigeon peas cooked with pig's snout, ribs and salt beef, corn cuckoo in balls of about 6" diameter sliced, rice in balls, white flour dumplings, green plantain, and sweet potato. The food is served on a plate and eaten with a spoon and the men sit on the spars which lie in the shipyard eating and drinking rum.

2.30 p.m.

Work is resumed with the placing of seven shores each approximately 12 ft. long on the starboard side of the vessel. The top of each shore is put into a pitchpine bracket nailed to the side of the vessel and the pointed bottom end is put into the sand. Next the wares (pitchpine planks of various lengths) are placed on the ground below the vessel, ten on the port side and thirty-three on the starboard. The wares are to ensure that the rollers do not sink into the sand.

3.35 p.m.

The rollers are placed under the keel of the vessel between the blocks on which the keel is resting with their ends extending between the chocks and the shores. They are three in number. The vessel is then decorated with flags.



5 p.m.

Work stopped and preparations for the Big Drum Dance began shortly after. Before this, however, a table was erected in the cabin where the *parents' plate*, a collection of various kinds of food supposedly for the spirits of deceased ancestors of the owner to eat, is laid out under a lantern. There is also a *parents' plate* at the owner's home in his bedroom. Before midnight no one may eat from it, the spirits having first choice. But at midnight the *parents' plate* is broken and all who wish may join in the scramble for the food which consists of : a sweet drink, a cup of cocoa, and one of coffee, 3 silk figs, a banana, 3 sapodillas, a loaf of sweet bread, a cake, a roasted chicken, pork, mutton and liver, 3 mangoes, an orange, an avocado pear, 4 Jamaican plums, hard round sugar sweets, a roast corn, ground-nut sugar cakes, peas soup in an enamel carrier, 3 boiled eggs, 3 bakes, rice in balls and corn cuckoo in balls, sweet potato, plantain, "bluggoe", and corn and flour dumplings.

For the Big Drum Dance a tarpaulin is slung between the coconut trees with one end supported by ropes from the vessel. The dancers and the drummers led by Sugar Adams arrived. There are altogether three drums. At about 9.15 p.m. a woman starts singing and the drums begin to beat. People

have come from all parts of the district and are gathered under the tarpaulin sitting and standing in roughly a square. The open space around which they stand is called the ring. As the drumming starts the owner enters the ring with a bottle of rum in one hand, a small glass in the other. He dances and his wife enters the ring with a jug of water. The owner dances around the ring pouring rum into the glass and throwing it on the ground as he goes. His wife follows throwing water where he has thrown rum. This is called wetting the ring and is done to a *Grand Bel* tune. After this a *Cromanti* song is played. The owner and his wife again wet the ring and dance. Another *Cromanti* is played and the owner dances with two towels, one in either hand, which he leaves on the ground crossed at the end of the dance. One by one members of his family go into the ring, pick up the towels, dance and replace them on the ground crossed, until finally someone puts the towels on the drum, and the drumming stops. Songs and dances of the Manding, Ibo and other *nations* succeed one another, accompanied by the drums, and later a variety of old creole dances, too, until the early hours of the morning.

That day about thirty men had assisted with the work in the morning and the number had grown to fifty by afternoon.

THE LAUNCHING

9 a.m.

Next day preparations for launching begin by putting bilge boards on the starboard bilge of the vessel. Two more pickets are put at the main anchor and the shore end of the purchase for the main anchor which overnight had been supported on two boats is secured to the eye of the bilge strap. A purchase is put from the starboard side of the vessel to a coconut tree. This is to guard against the vessel falling to port when the chocks are removed and before she is cut down. A 1"×2" pitchpine pole about 12 ft. long is nailed to the forward hatch and on this will be hoisted the name flag. Two additional rollers are set, one in front of the bow and the other on the port side of the vessel at the stern.

A check line consisting of a purchase is attached to a strap of $\frac{3}{4}$ " wire, passed through a hole bored in the stern post. The other end of the purchase is secured by a chain to a large root in the ground. The check line is used for controlling the speed of the vessel as she rolls forward if it becomes necessary. The free end of the rope is attached to a coconut tree.

9.53 a.m.

The starboard luff is put down with three pickets in manner similar to the main anchor. The stern and bow chocks as well as all other chocks are removed. The vessel now stands supported only by the seven shores.

A band consisting of a fiddle, two guitars, a triangle, banjo and tin chac-chacs starts to play 'Madeleine Oi' (a Trinidad Calypso) as seven men, each with an axe, take a drink of rum together and then stand each one opposite a shore. They are the axe-men who will cut her down. Each axe-man cuts the sides of his shore alternately and the point keeps sinking into the sand. This continues until the vessel is resting on her starboard side on the

rollers. The bilge boards protect the side of the vessel from being damaged by the rollers. During the cutting down men pull on the purchase which has been erected to prevent her from falling to port. She is cut down in seven minutes amidst great cheers and as she comes to rest the music stops. During the cutting down the owner, carpenter and older members of the crowd shout to the axe-men to take their time and not rush it. The vessel comes to rest without a sound and caulking the port side of the galvarstrow begins.

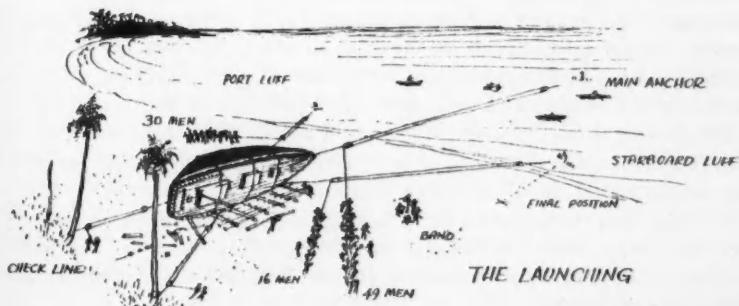
The usual procedure on the day of launching is that the priest and god-parents go around the vessel and on deck with the priest blessing the vessel. The name flag is then hoisted and unfurled whereafter the cutting down starts. After she has been cut down she is launched by hauling on the purchases until the vessel enters the sea and floats. In this case the priest was absent at Union Island during the morning and several of the god-parents were late, hence the departure from the usual procedure.

10.30 a.m.

The flag is broken amidst cheers of the crowd. The name was *Rival Dean*. All the while the band is playing. Caulking is still in progress on the port side and all the blocks, except the one nearest the stern on which the keel has been resting, are removed by digging holes in front of them and driving them forward from the port side with an iron headed sledge. The god-parents then go to the stern of the vessel where a bag made of white embossed chiffon hangs on a nail in the stern post. A small mallet wrapped in red and white ribbon is handed to each god-parent who puts a contribution into the bag and hits the stern of the vessel with the mallet three times or more to the cheers of the crowd as the music plays.

11.12 a.m.

Some of the god-parents sing hymns from the deck of the vessel and then the hauling starts with the shanty man singing and controlling the pulling with a whistle. The vessel is resting on three rollers and one roller is being held in front of the bow. Men and women are pulling on all three falls from sea to shore. The men are singing lustily "Long time ago was a very good time".



11.21 a.m.

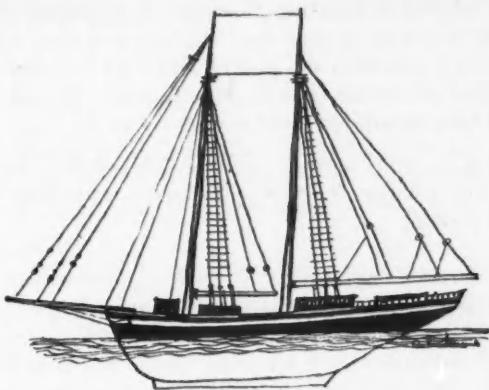
The pulling stops for a check of the anchors and it is discovered that the main anchor is *coming* (i.e. moving). Men are sent to put extra pickets and while this is being done the cake sticking and "dancing the cake" takes place. The cake, a three-layer butter sponge with raisins, iced in white, is stuck by two of the god-parents, Miss Phillis MacFarlane, the owner's god-daughter and Mr. Louisey, the Agricultural Officer. All the while music is being played. Mr. Louisey cuts the cake with knife and fork and holding the cake on the fork, puts it into Miss MacFarlane's mouth; he then eats a piece of the cake himself, after which he kisses Miss MacFarlane. The cake is on a table around which the god-parents of the vessel are standing.

After the sticking of the cake, it is danced from the table by one of the god-parents who then hands it to another god-parent and so on until every god-parent has danced the cake.

Pulling is started again by the shanty man blowing on his whistle and calling "Heave away". The men are pulling only on the port and starboard falls as the main anchor is being fixed, but presently the pulling stops as the starboard luff is coming too. It is decided to place port and starboard luffs on shore. On the starboard side a trench is dug on shore about 5 ft. from the sea and 14 ft. from the vessel. It is about 9 ft. long and 2' 6" deep, and a greenheart block about 8' long is put into the trench. The anchor (the starboard luff) is removed from the sea and buried in the trench with one side of the flue over the block with the end in the sand under the block. Four pickets are driven into the sand behind the block on the shore side and block and anchor are covered with sand.

Meanwhile the roller put in at the stern on the port side is rigged to be used as a lever. A length of rope is tied to the port end of the roller and a block is placed under it so that the port end points into the air. This rope is tied so that there are two free ends. The starboard purchase is secured at one end to the anchor buried in the sand and the other end of the purchase is hooked into the strap which holds the check line. On the port side the purchase has been removed from the anchor and secured to a piece of chain which has been wound round some mangrove roots and trees on the port side. One end of the port purchase is hooked on to the piece of chain and the other to a length of chain which has been shackled to the check line strap and wrapped once around the bilge strap. When this work has been completed, pulling re-starts on all three falls to the singing of shanties with occasional pauses to reset the jack or when the jack slips. At this stage nine men were using the port stern roller as a lever and the vessel was moving slowly forward. Every now and again water was thrown on the rollers and on the ropes where they passed round the coconut trees and the vessel inched its way forward to the strains of "Yard, oh! Yard, oh! Bell a ring a-yard, oh!" and "Come let's join the Rosabella".

During one of the pauses for re-setting the jack "she is wet down" i.e., rum is served to the men holding the falls preparing to pull. The pulling continues with intermittent pauses to reset the jack or free the main purchase rope which jammed.



SIDE ELEVATION OF SCHOONER.

2.30 p.m.

Lunch consists of beef, pork, mutton, rice, peas, potato, cuckoo made of corn, tannia and "bluggoe". There are drinks of rum and wine.

3.15 p.m.

After lunch, the wares are taken from the stern and placed further down the beach near the sea. Almost immediately after re-starting, the port fall bursts and the pulling is stopped. The vessel has moved a little but progress is slow. While the port fall is being repaired barley soup with bits of mutton and pork is served. About five minutes after the pulling re-starts the block on the sea end of the starboard luff is wrung and has to be replaced by a new block.

3.45 p.m.

Meanwhile Father Paul, the Roman Catholic priest, returns from Union Island where he has officiated at a wedding and the people gather around as he performs the blessing. He stands on the starboard side of the vessel about 30 ft. from it and by him stands the student priest (novice). Father Paul begins by reading in Latin from the Ritual a prayer for the launching or blessing of the new vessel. He then repeats the prayer in English, after which he addresses the crowd saying how glad he is to bless this vessel on the birthday of the Mother of Jesus. He hopes that the work done by the owners and people on the vessel, which shows that they are not idle but use the resources that God gave them, will be of use and benefit in Carriacou. He admires the courage of the owner who having lost one vessel is not discouraged but builds this magnificent vessel. He hopes that the owner and other people of Windward will run from port to port bringing goods to Carriacou and that God will bless the sailors who sail on the vessel.

He hopes that they will be christian sailors leading christian lives and supporting their families and prays that they will not perish in stormy seas but will be led by God's hand to the port of safety not only on this earth but to port of safety we are all travelling to—Heaven. He asks God to save the vessel and keep it safe for many years.

Father Paul, in white cassock, surplice and stole then walks round the vessel in an anticlockwise direction sprinkling it with holy water from a stoop made of pewter.

4.15 p.m.

When the blessing is finished the men go to the falls and resume pulling, with the lusty singing of shanties and pauses to set the jack. As the vessel moves forward the wares are taken from under the stern and set further down the beach and into the sea. The pulling continues until 4.49 p.m. when there is rain and everybody scampers to shelter under the hull of the vessel and in the dog houses which are in the shipyard.

4.55 p.m.

Pulling re-starts to the strains of the shanty "Yard-Oh!" but after three minutes the hook of the block on the starboard purchase is straightened by the pressure of pulling and comes off the chain of the starboard luff hitting a man on his foot. The injury, however, is not severe and the block is replaced. The rain again interrupts at 5.15 but after six minutes clears sufficiently for work to continue. An anchor is put on the port side on the beach in the same way as that on the starboard side. The chain is removed from the mangrove trees and roots and attached to this anchor. The pulling continues with great zest and the vessel is moving considerably but at 6.04 the port fall bursts and the pulling stops on the blast of the whistle. The women enjoy themselves singing as they help to pull on the falls and are now singing the shanty "Rosabella" substituting the name "Rival". Rum is served and the jack reset and pulling starts again. The women sing a new shanty:

Pull me over the sea

Edna and Ruby and Monica (Nelly) were there

One of them turn to the mister and said

Pull me over the sea.

(The mister in this song is the writer)

Pulling continues until about 6.40 when work is stopped for the day because of bad light. The bow of the vessel is now five yards from the surf and altogether during the day the vessel has been moved seventeen yards. The falls are secured on coconut trees, everyone has a drink of rum and goes home.

Next day the pulling starts about 8.30 a.m. and continues without mishap to the tackle until 12 noon. The pulling follows the same pattern as the previous day, except that after being moved about 22 yards there is no

further need for the jack as the bow of the vessel enters the sea. This is about 10.30 a.m. By noon it is gradually righting itself rising from its side until it floats upright in the water. There is great cheering as the vessel floats upright. The ship is pulled a little further on the main purchase and a 550 lb. anchor complete with chain is used on the port side to anchor her. About forty boys and young men swim out to the vessel and begin to rock her by running from one side of the deck to the other checking themselves with their hands on the rail. They then begin throwing each other overboard and diving.

People are dancing to the music of a guitar and chac chacs and drinking rum and wine. The music is augmented by a banjo and grows more spirited as does the dancing. The main purchase is placed on board the *Rival Dean* and the dancing and drinking continues late into the afternoon. In the night there is a dance at the home of one of the owner's relatives where all who have helped to launch the *Rival Dean* meet to drink and dance, all the while recalling incidents which took place during the launching. This continues late into the night fed by rum and wine.

The Shadow and the Substance

A study of aspects of the economic and social structure and the change in economic and social relations between whites and coloured free in slave society in British Guiana

BY RAWLE FARLEY

THE illusion prevails in British Caribbean history that the planter class fell. This, however, constitutes, at any rate for Guiana, an unexamined generalisation. The planter class never fell. It was transformed. The cause of the transformation lay in several directions. There were naturally those who inherited from their original planter forbears. There were managers and overseers who rose up into ranks by devious means. There were small men, smitten with social and economic ambition, who, eventually favoured by chance and will, made the grade. Sequestrators and speculators never lost any opportunity presented to become part of the plantocracy. Merchants used their profits to buy land or took advantage of failing credit obligations to force the surrender of mortgaged estates. But by far the most spectacular cause of the transformation was the artful and continuous infiltration into the planter class of that most insecure group of Caribbean people, the coloured population who were free. While the administrative integrity of the Colonial Office, the opportunism of D'Urban, and the self-interest of the sugar planters in London were furthering the pursuit of political and economic integration in the Guiana territories the free part of the coloured population were engaged in using every means to end their unhappy state of suspended freedom and gain for themselves firm and clear social and economic acceptance.

In slave society, liberty was the right of the free whites and of the coloured free population. The degree of freedom was, however, not the same for both these sections of free society. The white population, in the main, enjoyed full freedom, but the freedom of the coloured free population was largely relative. Social and economic development under slavery was, therefore, characterised by the organised demand of the coloured free population for the substance and not the shadow of freedom. Their demand triumphed in the years of decision after 1831. But in those momentous years freedom was instituted as being morally and legally consistent with "the common good of the great body of the people"¹ of Guiana. The condition was thus established whereby social and economic integration might develop *pari passu* with territorial integration.

In the rest of the British Caribbean, the same social privileges developed, but the same accompanying conditions did not hold. For territorial integration was yet to become a substantial reality throughout the area. The climax of social and economic freedom for the coloured free population coincided with

the triumph of an equal degree of freedom for the coloured slave population and with territorial integration. The coincidence gave Guiana a unique opportunity of demonstrating within the British Caribbean the advantages to be derived therefrom.

The planter class was evidently in origin comprised of the white population. Not all the white population were, of course, members of the plantocracy. Members of the white population served as plantation servants and, in 1784, the West Indian Company devised common regulations to govern the treatment of white plantation servants and the slaves.² The inclusion of the former under this common code no doubt influenced the institution of "several humane provisions" with regard to the rest of the slave population.³ The white population were also in origin merchants and clerks⁴ and, on the plantation, served as attorneys, managers, and overseers.⁵

The attorney of a property was defined by Hillhouse as the person left in charge by the proprietor during his absence from the colony. As such, he was responsible for the proper conducting of the concern during the proprietor's absence and, as a customary allowance, was given ten per cent. of the net revenue of the property. With long established and extensive estates where revenues were considerable and the duty of the attorney easy, a smaller sum was mutually agreed upon. The duties of the attorney varied considerably. He transacted the mercantile business of the estate, superintended the supply of provisions and clothing, the erection of buildings and all the ordinary and extraordinary expenses. He regulated the expenses of the estate in proportion to its income, provided it with a proper and efficient manager, and ensured that the produce found a good market. Theoretically, the attorney's duties required his presence on the estate and through this, he was enabled to form "a proper idea of the manner in which the manager discharged his duty both with regard to the cultivation and the care of the Negroes."⁶

The attorney and the manager were not usually the same person. The two jobs required different qualities and these were seldom combined in one person. The manager's duties included visits to the hospital to see how the sick fared, to see whether their medicines had the desired effect, and also to receive complaints and new patients. The manager accompanied the doctor on his visits to the sick, explained to him the character of different cases, received his instructions and noted his prescription in a journal kept for that purpose. Through association with the doctor, the manager gained a practical knowledge of various remedies and was thus more effectively able to superintend the sick nurse. The manager or a trusty overseer administered and mixed the prescription of the doctor in his absence.

But his duties extended beyond the hospital. He inspected the works and the buildings. He supervised in the different departments the manufacture of sugar, of rum, the drying or cleaning of coffee, or the preparing of cotton for the market. He paid the greatest attention to the state of the weather, the quality of the fuel, the cleanliness of the boiling house and the attendance of the overseers and their Negroes to their duties about the buildings. In the fields, he was concerned with the proper cutting of the canes, and their weeding and supply, with draining, with the good order

of the plantains, with the alertness of the watchmen, and with the condition of the cotton and coffee plants. Above all, the manager was the dispenser of punishment.⁷

The white plantation servants, the coloured slaves, the clerks, the overseers, the managers, the attorneys were all cogs in the machine and servants in high or low degree of the planter class. The planters according to Boling-broke, were usually persons who possessed a capital of from two to twenty thousand pounds. "With less than the former", he wrote, "they cannot easily commence their career, nor do they care to forsake it with less than the latter."⁸ The planter, so Milliroux explains, was either a man who possessed slaves whom he employed in the cultivation of the products of the soil, or one who employed in the same manner those slaves who had become free, taking no interest in those labourers as human beings, "exacting from them much labour, conceding to them in return less than they ought, and imbued in the highest degree with prejudice of colour."⁹ A soldier, Lieutenant Thomas Staunton St. Clair, who spent two years in Guiana, makes a further attempt to delineate the planter class. "The generality of planter," he wrote "...seem to entertain but one idea, in which all their thoughts and feelings are concentrated, and money, that prime necessity of human comfort, is their only object."¹⁰ For this object, they lived for years in unwholesome and miserable situations, "sacrificing health and the best years of their lives in discomfort and wretchedness, in the hope of returning to their native country with a fortune."¹¹

The white population in Guiana was never large. Its numbers in Guiana appear to be approximately as follows for the years below :

	<i>Demerara</i>	<i>Essequibo</i>	<i>Berbice</i>
1781			200 ¹²
1795	1,241	753 ¹³	
1797			300 ¹⁴
1798	1,595	701 ¹⁵	
1799			428 ¹⁶
1811	210	763 ¹⁷	600 ¹⁸
1813			For head money purposes 448 ¹⁹
1814			395
1815			362
1816			367
1817			373
1824			556 ²⁰
1827			523 ²¹
1828			522 ²²
1829	772	614	523 ²³
1830			552 ²⁴

The planter class was only a portion of the white population and, therefore, a very small proportion of the total population of the territories. Milliroux records that between 1822 and 1834 there were approximately in

Guiana only two hundred actual proprietors, of whom one hundred and twenty-five were absent from the colonies (being represented on the spot by attorneys) and seventy-five actually resident in Guiana²⁵. Yet this tiny group, whether absentee or resident, exercised the most extraordinary control over the social and economic structure of Guiana. They commanded the wealth, and they set the tone of society.

One of these absentees was Wolfert Katz, a great property owner in Berbice. Thomas Moody, who was once in charge of his estates attested that Katz' income from sugar, cotton, coffee and cocoa was over £40,000 a year. Katz was the owner of over 1,500 slaves and offered security for Moody for £170,000 if Moody would remain in Berbice as his joint partner and managing man of business, but Moody declined.²⁶ William Fraser, another absentee, had acquired considerable property, both real and personal in Berbice.²⁷ He was originally a native of Scotland, but had gone out early to Berbice where he was resident for twenty years.²⁸ Lambert Blair, who died in 1815 and was succeeded by his heir James Blair, was perhaps the greatest absentee landowner in all Berbice. In February, 1802, he bought Le Rossignol, and at the same time one thousand acres of land on the East sea coast between No. 41 and Devil's Creek and finally, 1,000 acres between this area and the adjoining No. 42.²⁹ Lambert Blair was already by 1804 the owner of 20,000 acres of land in Berbice.³⁰

The wealth of the absentee planter class was guarded by resident attorneys. Many of these attorneys were themselves proprietors. Many of them managed several estates at the same time. Major Van Holst was the sole representative of Plantations Belle Vue, Lust Lot Rust, Anna Clementina, Zorg and Hoop and joint representative of Plantation D'Edward. All these estates had a total slave population of 731 slaves but Van Holst was himself the proprietor of Pln L'Enterprise with 85 slaves.³¹ The table below gives further data about some of these attorneyships in Berbice and an indication of the material resources over which they had control :³²

<i>Attorney</i>	<i>Whether Proprietor himself or not</i>	<i>Representative of Pln</i>	<i>No. of Slaves</i>	<i>Additional Responsibilities</i>
Lt. I. L. Kip	...Pln Middleburg & Welvaaren (60 slaves)	Mara Eumania Essendam Bloemhoff La Fraternité	184 228 162	
Capt. F. Maurenbrecher		de Standvastighied op Hoop Van Beter Ruimzigt de Mieuwe vigilantie	143 158 80 174	Also of several mortgages on valuable estates and to a great amount and q, q. J. H. L. Maurenbrecher residing in Leyden (40 slaves)
Capt. J. V. Mitleholzer		(joint representative) Carel & Willemhoop Privi	69 6	
J. C. Wolff		Ithaca and Kloordsburg	206	

<i>Attorney</i>	<i>Whether Proprietor himself or not</i>	<i>Representative of Pln</i>	<i>No. of Slaves</i>	<i>Additional Responsibilities</i>
Capt. H. C. Mittleholzer	Owner of 12 slaves	(Joint representative) Ithaca Woordsburg N. Vigilantie	114 92 174	
H. D. Obermuller Jr.		L'Esperance Joint representative	148	Also representative of sundry persons (12 slaves)
		D'Edward J. L. Maurenbrecher	140 40	
Lt. D. Westrik	Owner of 7 slaves	Joint representative Schepmoed Mara Jemania Essendam	135 185 228	
I. Overem—		Joint representative de Liefde & Zuid Holland	234	

The planter class was, however, not a closed caste group. Entry into it was the cynosure of all economically alert eyes. Success was in one way or another a matter of will, of speculative skill, of good chance, of the use or misuse of Negro slaves, of chicanery, of really hard work or of the accidents of birth.

Millioux thus described one way of climbing into this exalted economic and social sphere.³³ "The planter", he wrote, "arrived in the colony, young, ignorant and poor; he was employed as overseer for wages by an inhabitant. In a few months he was sufficiently inured to cause the punishments ordered by his master to be inflicted under his own eyes; and had learnt the details of the cultivation of coffee and of sugar cane. From the time he became manager, he had lived on the plantation; then when his accumulated savings permitted him, he bought land and some slaves to cultivate, or else he became proprietor of a plantation in full work. He had not always to pass through this novitiate, and frequently became a planter by speculation and in a short time. For that he only had need of money, or for lack of money, much impudence. There is something marvellous in the recital of speculations made during the war, and also after the peace of 1815. Then one saw adventurers buy plantations for £100,000 sterling for which they paid nothing or 'but a small sum in cash or gave bills recklessly; so certain were they that a few crops would enable them to pay the capital.'

But the plant class had other origins. John Donner, a member of the Old Council of Government of Berbice, was formerly a midshipman in the Navy and later held an official position in the Secretary's Office. He became a planter thereafter, having mortgaged his estate to Mr. John Ross of Liverpool in return for a loan of ten thousand pounds.³⁴ A Mr. Monroe, another member of the Old Council of Government in Berbice, was a qualified physician and a graduate of the University of Edinburgh. He subsequently became a planter.³⁵ Mr. Scott, a native of the West Indies, was the son of a Church of England clergyman. He became a planter, speculatively investing £10,000 on a cotton estate in Berbice.³⁶

A common way of accession into the planter class was through inheritance. James Blair not only inherited from Lambert Blair but in the days of English rotten boroughs bought himself a membership of Parliament. He was representative of Muirhead.³⁷ William Fraser, who claimed that he could not marry satisfactorily and had four children born out of wedlock, sought to legitimise them in 1823 as he then wished to leave the principal part of his property to them. At the time of his application, two of his children, John Frazer aged thirteen and George Frazer, aged eight, were resident at Paisley in North Britain and were at school there. Another child, Jane Frazer, aged five, was resident and at school in Liverpool, while the fourth child, Anna Maria Fraser, aged thirteen, was with her mother Mary Stewart in the Island of Barbados. There were only two ways of legitimising children. The first was by subsequent marriage of the parents; the second was by obtaining a writ called letters of legitimisation from the Secretary of State.³⁸ Fraser's petition was granted³⁹ and his children became potential entrants into the planter class.

To own and maintain a plantation in Guiana was an expensive business. Drainage had to be undertaken, roads and bridges had to be built and maintained.⁴⁰ "The plain truth is," Landowner wrote, "a poor man has no business with a sugar estate in Demerara; he might as well, on the strength of being able to purchase an old barn in Lancashire, consider himself qualified to set up as a Manchester manufacturer."⁴¹ For men with small capital or no capital but with the will and ambition to enter the planter class, these circumstances dictated the methods by which they could realise their hopes. The conditions of entry were inescapable. To utilise land and buildings, the owner needed "a large and never failing supply of ready money at command, to improve his machinery, and to drain and till his fields." He required sufficient independence to give his canes time to mature, instead of being forced to cut them young "or at a time when their juice is poor and watery, and scarcely convertible into sugar, in order to furnish labourers' wages, or to satisfy the demands of some inexorable creditor." He was obliged to have the means of renewing and replanting his land instead of trusting to ratoons year after year. Above all, he had to be in a position to buy his coals and other stores at the market price, "in place of promising the merchant fifty per cent. above their value for the risk of trusting him." The needy landowner was a nuisance and a hindrance to Guiana, only wasting and frittering away valuable labour which, in the hands of a man of capital, was potentially "a source of permanent prosperity to it."⁴²

Many managers and overseers, in the face of these weighty considerations, shrewdly wielded their way upwards with the help of the Negro. They saved their salaries to buy a Negro whom they hired out to work. The possession of one Negro eventually made them owners of fifteen or twenty and these were then formed into a Task Gang. The task gang did a specific quantity of work, "such as clearing and preparing so many acres of land, draining and planting the same," for which they were paid by the acre.⁴³ These gangs were of great use to new settlers. When plantation work did not offer, these gangs

were used in timber cutting to build houses, mill frames, and in various other works connected with the estate.⁴⁴ So through the task gang, the manager and overseer reached up to fortune and to the position of planter.

But there were in this respect individual cases of successful initiative that bordered on the extraordinary. This was the case of Mynheer Vos, a Dutchman, who in fifteen years, rose up from a common soldier to become a planter of fortune possessing an unincumbered estate valued at £20,000 sterling.⁴⁵ Vos, as a soldier, bought and sold small articles to purchase his discharge from the army. When discharged he had a few hundred guilders in savings and with this he bought a sloop boat, hired a Negro and began as a huckster selling his goods on various estates. In 1785 he used his profits to buy 500 acres of land and with three Negroes cleared it of heavy forest and bush to start an active and lucrative career as a planter.

The planter class was also distinguished by a quality of living which was peculiar to itself and which embodied visible evidence of the advantages of belonging thereto. In Demerara while most planters were resident on estates, the richest planters enjoyed the luxury of houses in town. Cummingsburgh began as an exclusive residential area for such planters.⁴⁶ It was a comparatively simple proposition to these planters to establish such homes. From their plantations they obtained the necessary tradesmen. The plantation bricklayer laid the foundation of the house and built the kitchen, and the plantation carpenters completed the building of the frame as well as the painting of the new establishment.⁴⁷ Whether Dutch or British, whether it was the town house or country house, the planters' residential comfort was in the hands of a profusion of servants.⁴⁸ Their style of living was so extraordinarily lavish that in Berbice Governor Beard was able to stem all argument against the Governor's residential expenses by pointing out that the planters who resided on their estates in Berbice were in possession of every luxury and comfort.⁴⁹

But the social pull of the planter class lay in another direction. While their wealth brought the possibility of luxurious living, the planter developed an aversion to work as great as his love of luxury. The system of slavery inevitably corrupted the human personality. The planter who profited from the slave system was himself a slave of the degeneracy which the system inevitably bred. All labour was held to be derogatory and "the preordained and exclusive portion of the slaves." "The planter," Milliroux explained, "was proud idleness personified . . . the attraction of having nothing to do, and of living in plenty explains the singular prestige attached to the condition of a planter. Everyone wished to be he . . . the mania for possessing land to which slaves were attached was like an hallucination, and lasted until the approach of abolition."⁵⁰

The excessive love of luxury, this contempt of work, correlated with a powerful resistance to taxation which was necessary to maintain minimum administrative services. Taxation it is true, could blunt old existing enterprises and discourage new ones. It could kill marginal firms and weaken the whole economic strength of the community. Much depends on circumstances. In Guiana too, after 1807, all was not well and the planters, continually debt-

ridden, could find some justification. The development also of a country like Guiana was vitally related to the fostering of enterprise, as far as was possible. But even in the face of these considerations the planters as a whole were too much opposed to the principle of taxation and with all too alarming a spontaneity. Resistance to taxation was the source of bitter dispute between the administration and the planter and the popularity of the Governor hinged on his attitude to amelioration and emancipation. The years after 1807 were even more acutely soured by such disputes. The opposition of the planters found expression in the Council Chambers since their economic dominance gave them privilege of political representation.

In August, 1816, Bentinck of Berbice reported to the Colonial Office the resistance of the Council to the imposition of taxes.⁵¹ He was forced without their assistance to ascertain and fix prices or rates of the several kinds of produce in order to collect the weigh money or *ad valorem* duty of 2½ per cent. Since these were sanctioned by Charter and the pressing wants of the country required their immediate payment into the Treasury, in the interest of the furtherance of the public service, the Governor was forced to act above the heads of his Council. Members refused to assist him. Not only did the planters refuse to assist him; they refused to meet their obligations to the public purse. According to the Governor, they regarded his fixing of prices even in these circumstances, as "illegal and a bad precedent."⁵²

The opposition was so intransigent that the only solution seemed to be the complete dismissal of the Council and the use of the Governor's existing powers of nomination to create a new Council of Government. This is what Bentinck recommended. "Indeed, My Lord," he wrote, "I fear that unless the present members of my Council are dismissed, their determined wanton opposition will still continue, notwithstanding all my endeavours to conciliate and promote concord."⁵³ The greater the wealth of the Councillors, the greater the impertinence. The most impudent planter on the Council was George Monro, and he was the most wealthy.⁵⁴ In Bentinck's view, his suspension would before long become necessary.⁵⁵

In May, 1817, Bentinck faced the problem of collecting considerable arrears of acre money. The debtors were some of the wealthiest Berbice planters. At the time of Batenburg, they had also refused to pay these dues arguing that the money belonged to the Berbice Association.⁵⁶ The administration needed this money desperately as public buildings were in disrepair, and so too were communications in the town.⁵⁷

In January, 1823, the planter class formed a powerful combine and petitioned Bathurst against a proclamation issued in September, 1822, calling on them to give at once security of payment at certain stipulated periods or face levy by execution for the recovery of this acre-money debt.⁵⁸ Among the memorialists were Wolfert Katz, James Blair, and John Turpin, the greatest property owners in Berbice. They begged Bathurst to relieve them of the debt which they had imagined through "lapse of time and calamitous alteration in their circumstance" would have been remitted. They pleaded that the recovery of the money was being instituted at a time when pressure

upon them was "unprecedented in the annals of the colony". It would fall heavily "in the extreme" on them. The proof was the well-known fact that the greater part of the district in the colony on which yet rested a considerable proportion on the uncollected acre-money presented nothing but a tract of country "where the hand of labour (had) of necessity ceased to exert itself." The lands upon which the acre money still rested had by long abandonment returned "to almost a state of nature." The payment of the acre money would be granting a value for an article "which intrinsically is nothing worth."

Even where cultivation was continued, it would be viewed "only as a forlorn hope", "the deteriorated value of the produce and the enhanced price of labour leaving to the cultivators barely the means of defraying the expenses attendant on their unfortunate undertaking." Many who owed acre money were living at subsistence level as cattle farmers. The payment of the acre money would thus make sacrifice of property unavoidable and reduce them to a state of beggary.⁵⁹

These arguments are important. They are not all untrue, but they become extremely suspect when the greatest and wealthiest planters combine with the marginal to use them to escape their financial obligations. But the arguments are important because they have been used throughout the history of Guiana and they typify the rotten thread which has run through the whole social and economic development of the country and which infected the new intermediate class which rose up after freedom. They represent the illogical demand for representation and for administrative arrangements which do not involve the self-sacrifice of those who can pay. Those who gain from the country must have rights, but no obligations. The circumstances of Guiana or any other country for that matter made impossible the triumph of this shameless philosophy.

In 1825, Berbice wanted military protection but at no cost to themselves.⁶⁰ In 1826, the inevitable happened. With the concurrence of the Colonial Office, the Governor flung out the Old Council⁶¹ and nominated a new one of more reasonable temper.

The privilege and power of the planter class was as attractive to the coloured free population as it was to the white population who subserved the plantocracy. The coloured free population came into existence, however, mainly by moral default. For them, entry into the planter class although apparently near, because of their origins, proved to be potentially an elusive proposition. Yet they rose up not only to challenge the power and prestige of the white planter class, but themselves to become members of that class sharing, through possession of property, all the influence and status that was derived from that membership. The decisive advantages they possessed were their education and blood relationship with coloured slave and white planter groups, the joint support of whom was of no little avail to the coloured free in their demand for full civil and economic rights, and the integrity of the Colonial Office which had the courage to remain uninfluenced by the hysteria and fears of a powerful and vociferous section of the white planter class.

The coloured free owed their origin, in large measure, to the fact that the female population was very small in comparison with the male and to

the moral lapse which this circumstance induced. In Demerara, a common method of supplying the deficiency was to send to Barbados and other "fully peopled islands" for ladies who were always available for purchase or could be induced to come and settle free in Demerara.⁶² Many coloured women in Stabroek even made a business of feminine importation receiving a premium, besides expenses, for any women introduced from the man with whom they cohabited. Martinique and Guadeloupe in this way made to Demerara significant contributions of free coloured women.⁶³ The newly arrived European was provided with a housekeeper "a black, a tawnee, a mulatto, or a mestee" bought for one hundred to one hundred and fifty pounds sterling and she fulfilled all the duties of a wife except presiding at table.⁶⁴ On the plantation too, petty proprietors lived in a revolting state of promiscuousness mid many females, their slaves, and offspring begotten by them. The stranger to the plantation was offered female company for the night. According to Milliroux, the majority of the Europeans lived degraded in a state of concubinage with women of colour and creole hireling, and managers and subordinates lived likewise.⁶⁵

One reason was, of course, the legal prohibition of marriage between white and coloured free. It was not until 1812 that some mitigation of this condition was made. In June, 1812, Carmichael, the Governor of Berbice, issued a proclamation facilitating such marriages between lower class whites and among free people of colour "many of whom were prevented from entering into that state by the heavy fees of the Secretary's Office." In consequence of the proclamation, many couples living in concubinage came forward to be married.⁶⁶

By 1823, marriage between whites and the coloured free population was no uncommon event. In January, 1823, Beard reported that within the last five or six years, it was "no uncommon thing for the most respectable white and coloured free people to intermarry and to be introduced, and admitted into the first society without regard to the relative nature of their situation in society and the practice and usage of other British Colonies."⁶⁷

In high places, however, this preferable state was still lacking. At the end of 1822 every member of the Council of Government of Berbice had a large family of coloured children.⁶⁸

The numbers of the coloured free population expanded rapidly. In 1795, the total coloured free population of Demerara and Essequibo was 658.⁶⁹ by 1811, this population increased to 2,980.⁷⁰ In 1829, the coloured free in these territories numbered 6,360.⁷¹ In Berbice, the free coloured population continuously increased from 242 in 1799⁷² to 1,161.⁷³

If not completely surrendered to idleness or poverty, the coloured free population were primarily occupied at the beginning with manual callings.⁷⁴ When Bolingbroke arrived in Guiana, the captain of the ship was surrounded by a band of hucksters, many of whom were coloured free members of the population.⁷⁵ Free women of colour organised huckstering on a colony-wide scale using ten to twenty Negroes and winning riches by their shrewdness.⁷⁶ The butchers of Stabroek were mainly free men of colour who had bought their freedom and besides had some monetary security behind them.⁷⁷

Their social position was, however, most unenviable but easily understandable in the circumstances. They were despised by the whites and by the coloured slave population, both of whom were parentally responsible for their existence. The white planter class found the same use for the coloured free as for the aboriginal Indians. They were readily organised as a force to secure the planters against coloured slave insurrections. In 1798, John Daly, one of the greatest landlords in Demerara, offered to raise such a force of disciplined mulattoes to protect the settlement at a time when planters and others who had property in Demerara were uneasy "lest the dissemination of French doctrines should so far obtain among the blacks as to render their manifest superiority in number formidable to and perhaps eventually subversive of the dominion which immemorial custom and property have vested in the planters."⁷⁸ Daly stated clearly that the mulattoes were regarded as an "intermediate check in favour of the white inhabitants."⁷⁹

The mulattoes were, however, not trusted by the white planters. The corps of mulattoes were to be gathered together to act as riflemen "and to constitute an intermediate force between the white and black regiments," but they were to be officered by gentlemen of British birth and extraction. The memorialists begged leave to state further that there was "an innate aversion to the Blacks among men of colour, and an almost equal attachment to the whites."⁸⁰

It was out of these unpromising circumstances, that the coloured free rose within a quarter of a century to become overseers, managers, and the planters and pursue mercantile activities and trades whereby some of them were enabled to purchase landed properties on which the ordinary produce of the colony was growing.⁸¹ At the end of 1822, there was a large body of respectable free coloured inhabitants "in Berbice many of whom were men of considerable property in land and slaves and of great influence in the colony."⁸²

Among these were a Mr. Henry, a coloured planter of Berbice, Mr. Schwartz and Mr. Spangenburg. Henry was a principal merchant in Berbice as well as the sole owner and proprietor of two valuable estates, one of sugar and the other of coffee, together with over four hundred Negro slaves. He was also representative of a mercantile house in London and, as such, had charge of another large sugar estate in the Colony and upwards of 350 Negroes more.⁸³ Mr. Henry was reported in 1827 as the proprietor of unincumbered estates producing no less than ten thousand pounds a year.⁸⁴ Schwartz was also a principal merchant and a man of property, while Spangenburg "a gentleman of superior education and of great respectability" was the attorney representative of others and had under his immediate charge and care both estates and slaves.⁸⁵ Another coloured man, Thornton, was an absentee who lived in Trinidad but possessed considerable property in Berbice.⁸⁶

The coloured free population could at no time be disregarded by the white population. They constituted a challenge—the only challenge—to their social and economic position. With them, there was no fault to be found. They were loyal and industrious. The great advantage, however, of

the coloured free and the great equalising force in the situation was the education they had received. Their education commanded respect and lent their demands dignity and force. To the white planter, the coloured freeman was a Negro; to the coloured slave population, the freeman was a Negro. The coloured freeman never sought to escape from this obvious identification. What the coloured freeman sought was the social and economic acceptance and integration which logically derived from his education and culture. He sought, not to be white, but in all respects to be treated as white, which in effect was a demand to enjoy all the rights and privileges of the planter class on equal terms in view of his education, his cultural attainments and his evident industry. This demand embodied a principle vitally important for the future of social and economic relations in a polyglot Caribbean community.

The coloured free child had the original advantage of being freed at once after birth and of being educated in England by those who could afford it from the time he was three or four.⁸⁷ Of two of the illegitimate children of the great Berbice property-owner Wolfert Katz, one, George Katz aged eighteen was about to be placed in October, 1821, as a scholar at an English University and another, Matthew, also eighteen, was already domiciled in the Country of Norfolk studying agriculture.⁸⁸ The Council of Government of Berbice, all fathers of illegitimate coloured children, had in 1822 some of their children already educated in the United Kingdom and others still there who had received "the most liberal and expensive education" to qualify them to fill situations in Berbice thereafter.⁸⁹ In May, 1823, the white parents of the coloured free population noted that the considerable coloured free population of Berbice was being daily augmented by the arrivals of young coloured men from Europe where they had the advantage of a liberal education and had acquired, because of their education, not only character but respectability.⁹⁰

The rising economic competition and the potential social pressure of the coloured free population were responsible for the disabilities which were set up against their progress and which qualified their freedom. Because of their superior educational opportunities, the free coloured resented the institution of these barriers which were embodied principally in four Ordinances. By an Ordinance of 1799, patrols between seven and ten o'clock in the night permitted to disperse in the streets any assemblage of Negroes and mulattoes and to confine in stocks any who resisted.⁹¹ This Ordinance further enabled patrols to inquire from coloured persons carrying goods whence they came and whither they were going. If the patrol was not satisfied, the coloured person could be detained until the truth was found out. By further enactment, coloured free persons discovered in town at night or during the evening on pretense of visiting friends were liable to be ordered to quit the town or to imprisonment if they resisted.⁹²

Another Ordinance in 1802 regulated the dances of coloured free people. It would appear that invitations to these dances were extended to the coloured slave population. This Ordinance forbade this practice and forbade further the use of the drums or of any other musical instrument used by the slaves.⁹³ Privilege was even to be maintained after death. By Ordinance of 1818, a

public burial ground was established,⁹⁴ but distinct portions of the burial ground were to be allotted to whites, coloured free, and the slave population.⁹⁵ Coloured people were not admitted to positions of public trust, nor were they eligible for military appointments. There was distinction drawn even in arrangements for the worship of God. Free people of colour were not to be admitted to the same pews in church as the whites.⁹⁶

The regulations, however, which most threatened to disestablish completely the coloured free population were the Ordinances of 1810 and 1814. It was these regulations that sparked the organised protest of the free people of colour, since they threatened their economic opportunities and so their social chances and virtually mocked their freedom and their education. These Ordinances of 1st October, 1810 and 4th July, 1814, regulated the proportion of whites to Negroes to be kept on each estate.⁹⁷ In October, 1814, A. A. de la Court, the principal agent for Crown Property in Guiana, petitioned the Court of Criminal Justice praying for the Court's decision as to "whether free coloured people with respect to the spirit of (these proclamations) . . . are or are not to be considered as whites."

The Court's order and reply was uncompromising. "Free coloured people," the Court ruled, "with respect to the spirit of the proclamation of the Court of Policy enacted on the 3rd June, 1814, are not to be considered as whites."⁹⁸

The protest movement of the free people of colour was set in motion in March, 1822, when the Fiscal of Berbice actually enforced the Ordinances of 1810 and 1814 against Adrian Krieger, a representative of Plantation Gelderland on the Berbice River and a member of the Council of Government of Berbice.⁹⁹ The Fiscal had recently visited his estate and found it deficient in the number of whites required by the Ordinance of 1814. The Fiscal thereupon fined him five hundred guilders, which he required to be paid immediately on pain of legal proceedings. The Krieger case became a test case. In a petition to the Governor, Krieger demanded a speedy remedy to avoid the hardships which this action would impose upon him and other estate administrators and "to counteract the serious effects arising from the infliction of a penalty of so grievous and harsh a nature." The Ordinance had been a dead letter until then. He had never for a moment imagined that he was infringing the Ordinance when, in case of a deficiency, he placed free coloured persons on different estates as overseers "who after having received the benefits of education in Europe and desirous of obtaining an honest livelihood in their native country preferred the occupation of planters to any other and in every respect proved themselves capable of rendering the greatest services to the colony by their industry and perseverance."¹⁰⁰

The consequences were serious. The enforcement of the Ordinances would at once introduce the necessity of removing free coloured people from the employments they held, deprive them of the means of becoming useful members of society and also cause a dangerous "division between the white population and a body of inhabitants in every way assimilated to the whites except in colour." Krieger did not want any change in the Ordinances, but

suggested an extension of the meaning to include the coloured free population.¹⁰¹

At a meeting of the Council of Government on 1st April, 1822, the Council rejected Krieger's petition. The rejection of the petition was met next day by a united demand from the coloured free population praying the Governor and the Council not only for relief from the Ordinances of 1810 and 1814, but, among other grievances, adverting to that of having been hitherto debarred the privilege of being more than non-commissioned officers in the militia."¹⁰² The petition of the coloured free constituted a limited but firm and united demand for the removal of two of the most important disabilities which debarred them from the enjoyment of the full privileges of the planter class. The issue was, however, far more fundamental. The issue turned out to be a conflict between the philosophy of assimilation and the gospel of apartheid as the basis of social and economic organisation in a polyglot community.

The coloured free in their memorial reaffirmed their loyalty, their attachments to the interest and welfare of the community, the vital service they rendered to the Country in times of crisis, and the fidelity and efficiency with which they had discharged their professional and civic duties. They protested against their exclusion on the basis that they were not white from the commissioned appointments by the very regulations of the Burgher Militia under which every coloured person on an estate was actually ordered to perform militia service and when every coloured person on the plantations was actually enrolled with the militia.¹⁰³

The principle upon which they based a demand for the reversal of these obstructive regulations was carefully formulated. It was "that . . . difference in colour from the white population cannot in justice be attributed to them as a fault." Their exclusion would be a particular taxation to the coloured proprietor, "a great hardship on those among the coloured who depend on their livelihood as planters, managers, and overseers and, in general, on all of the coloured, whose education and attainments have allowed them to consider themselves on the nearest approach to the white population (of Berbice)."

The Council of Government considered the petition on the same day. Adrian Krieger was significantly absent. The Council took into account the fact that a large proportion of the free coloured population had conducted themselves "with the greatest propriety", and that "their loyalty and fidelity stood unimpeached" and that "they ought in consequence to have the advantages of gaining a livelihood as agriculturists equal with the white inhabitants."

The Council therefore resolved to grant the relief prayed for and to consider the coloured free population eligible in future to fill the situation and employments on estates then "exclusively admitted to whites." The Secretary of the Government was directed to prepare an amendment to the Ordinance of 4th July, 1814.¹⁰⁴

The Council, however, ruled that the removal of these disabilities was not to advert to or interfere with the granting of Commissions in the Militia, "the power of granting these belonging exclusively by the King's Instructions

and the local regulations of the Militia to the Governor."¹⁰⁶ Despite this ruling, Beard reported that the Council at once passed by "all the former restrictions and prejudices whereby free coloured people were placed upon equality with the white inhabitants, and invested with control and command not only over large gangs of slaves, but also over all the white persons who were overseers on the estates on which the coloured became managers."¹⁰⁷

Nonetheless in September, 1822, he proclaimed his order and direction that the economic disabilities discussed be removed as agreed on and "that the free coloured inhabitants be placed upon a footing with their white brethren and taken and considered for all this purpose of the (Ordinance of 4th July, 1814) as coming within the full scope, meaning and intent thereof."¹⁰⁸

Then events took an astonishing turn. Local prejudice became excited as it seemed to do whenever an improvement in the condition of the free coloured persons or the slaves was attempted.¹⁰⁹ The Council attacked the Governor for issuing a proclamation on his own authority. They objected specially to the coloured people being referred to as "brethren".¹¹⁰

Coloured and white relations split wide open. The coloured population sternly declaimed against the omissions of the Council of Government. "Your petitioners," they declared in their memorial to the Governor ". . . witness with regret that neither their education, their attainments, their good conduct, and even the noblest exertion can elevate them to the consideration of their fellow-colonists; and to judge of the effects to the cause are considered as a body of men incapable of governing themselves and to whom the least trust or confidence could not be given . . ."¹¹¹

The free coloured were on firm ground. The Town Battalion of the Militia in Berbice turned out on parade one hundred and fifty privateers, over eighty of whom were free people of colour. Yet there was no free coloured Commissioned Officer, as the people of colour demanded. The Governor was moved to action. In 1822, three vacancies for Lieutenant's Commissions took place in the Coloured Companies. The free coloured immediately pressed their claims so strongly that Beard granted them. They appeared to him "reasonable" in that "persons having so much property at stake in the colony and comprising so very large a proportion of its population (nearly five to one in favour of these persons) should feel an honourable emulation in its protection and defense"—independent of the sound policy of removing "any little remaining jealousies or discontent that might exist among them."¹¹² Beard consulted with the Major and the Adjutant General of the Town Battalion and appointed to the vacancies three outstanding coloured men—Henry, Schwartz and Spangenburg.¹¹³

The appointments set off a chain reaction; Wolfert Katz expressed ugly feelings and wrote an even uglier letter to Beard. The letter read as follows:¹¹⁴

"Dear Governor,

Having consulted with my friends, it is the general opinion that as the appointments which have given so much offence have been announced through the *Colonial Gazette*, the revocation of them must appear through the same channel and in that case the meeting on

Friday will be altogether unnecessary. But should you decline making the public atonement, I beg to assure you the meeting may feel it their duty to adopt measures more repugnant to your feeling and dignity as Governor."

On 18 December, 1822, Beard addressed the Council and the Council replied the next day.¹¹⁵ To them the appointments were an "evil". The Council brazenly declared that Beard's action had "unnecessarily set in motion" a serious question "which would give rise to feelings unknown" and open "a prospect of division between those who for all the purposes of their situation and pursuits in life were living in cordiality and on terms of mutual good will."¹¹⁶

The Council, Wolfert Katz, John Ross, the representative in Berbice of James Blair, M.P., attempted to set opinion on fire. Private meetings were held: militia officers far from town were called up and persuaded to resign. They attempted to stir up discontent among the coloured free themselves. They threatened the Governor, but all their efforts met with ill success.¹¹⁷

Beard was shocked and appeared ready to go back on his tracks. He declared that had the Council opposed the measure on 2nd April he would have paused before making the appointments. "I . . . never could have anticipated a future objection on their part, more particularly so when I considered (as the fact is) that every member of the Council has a large family of coloured children himself . . . I really thought they would feel these appointments a compliment to themselves and their connections and that they would be the more satisfactory to them in as much as they were made quietly and on a very limited scale, not intended to be carried further without courting public discussion." "Moreover," he added, "Mr. Henry was the intimate friend and visitant of every one of them."¹¹⁸

Henry Schwartz and Spangenburg resigned, until the Colonial Office made a decision.¹¹⁹

Katz and company went beyond the Governor. On 18 December, they addressed a petition to the Colonial Office, seeking openly to infect it with the gospel of apartheid.¹²⁰ The mask was entirely dropped.

It was hard but necessary, these memorialists asserted, that the accident of colour should exclude men from places of power and trust. The exclusion of the free coloured on this basis was, in their view, supported by moral arguments as well as by the soundest principles of Colonial Policy. The Commissions were obnoxious to them. It was too material a change "in an order of things coeval with European superiority." The coloured people of Berbice were not inferior to the "same caste" throughout the West Indies, but to a full participation of the rights and privileges of British colonies until civilisation and a competent knowledge of the obligations imposed on them as parties to the social compact shall have entitled them to that distinction."

The memorialists advanced other arguments, but they were principally concerned with two which were basic to their philosophic outlook. "By encouraging coloured persons," they wrote, ". . . the influx and encouragement of British colonists and adventurers are greatly checked, and of

consequence the Bond of Union between the Colony and the parent state weakened." The second was an assertion that the greater part of the coloured class were foreigners "if not by birth, at least by education" and as not a few had served in the French Imperial Armies, were tinctured with revolutionary principles. They brought fears of another St. Domingo, Guadeloupe and Grenada where they added "the part acted by the mulattoes . . . is but too faithfully recorded in characters of blood."¹²¹

The white planters advanced the usual arguments of convenience. They asserted that no object throughout the Caribbean was "so hateful and odious to the Negro population as a mulatto in authority over them." They pleaded "that favour shown to the (coloured free) would be to countenance vice which it should be the end and object of legislation to amend." They made great play of an expected awakening of jealousy among "the free blacks" and of disturbance among the rest of the Negro population.

Their attitude was, however, clearly inspired by economic and social insecurity in the face of the new rights won by the free coloured. The petitioners did not conceal their contempt of the coloured free who had so long served them so well. With little exception, they thought, the free coloured were "little emerged from ignorance above the slave population." They could not conceal their insecurity. The innovation, they complained, put the coloured free on an equal footing with Europeans and altered not only the face of society but sapped the very foundations of institutions.¹²²

This petition marked a turning point in the social and economic development of Guiana. The consequences were hardly what Katz and his coterie would have anticipated. There was no doubt of the intensity of their convictions. Many who shared these convictions and petitioned against the extension of privilege to the coloured population were penniless and attached their names to lots of land which had long since been abandoned.¹²³ The social conscience was roused. Decency and love of social justice triumphed once again over the depravity to which human nature is also heir.

Beard, still shaken by the endeavours of Katz and the Council of Government and the representative of the Rt. Hon. Mr. Blair, M.P., expressed his surprise that the Council should have been so ignorant of the numerous instances in the Caribbean of free men of colour holding commissions.¹²⁴ He was apparently convinced that in Berbice the original prejudices had well-nigh disappeared. "Whatever former prejudices and jealousies prevailed," he wrote, "it appeared to me to have been gradually overcome, and indeed, considering the great proportion the free coloured inhabitants bear to the whites, their education, their large property, their near connection and relationship with the whites, and their great influence with the colony, it was but natural to expect these prejudices to give way."¹²⁵

Beard's judgment was not altogether wrong. A subtle and phenomenal change had come about over the years. In the earlier history of social and economic development, the coloured free earned the hostile and uncertain regard of the white planter, enterprising but coldly materialistic, and the coloured slave population, bound together by the deprivation of their liberty and knowing not how to look upon the new people of colour who came among

them. The coloured free lived uneasily in the forced role of a buffer group between white planters, anxious about the preservation of their property, and the coloured slaves, equally anxious about their liberty. But within a quarter of a century of discontinuous occupation by Europeans, the coloured free had earned through their education and through their public and private life a new economic and social status. The coloured free therefore played a new role of the most tremendous significance. Their origin lent them now peculiar social force. They were the integrating influences in a society which was always in danger of being fractionalised. They were the symbols of a new age in which economic and social privileges were the right of all men of good enterprise. It was freedom now which distinguished man and man and not colour and caste.

That is why "the free blacks" supported their "brethren of colour." They expressed solidarity of interests with the coloured free appointed to the Commissions.¹²⁶ "Your memorialists," they stated, "being themselves included in that class of people, which in the West Indies is more particularly called the coloured inhabitants, never could make any distinction between that part of the inhabitants and themselves, and have considered their interests as running from the same source indivisibly one; notwithstanding some discontented minds of the white population have tried to prevail upon your memorialists to separate their common interests, a separation which would naturally undermine the principles of the internal tranquillity and welfare of this colony by exciting hatred and enmity between the same body of Burghers."¹²⁷

Their support was joined by the support of that section of the white population who were united in matrimony with females of colour and "consequently (had) good reason to be anxious that their offspring should enjoy the same rights and benefits which they themselves are entitled to."¹²⁸ The acts of appointment to their way of thinking were "salutary and prudential" and could not fail "to cement more closely a Union between the two classes so nearly assimilated in manners, interest, and education."¹²⁹

By August, 1823, the Colonial Office accepted these principles, confirmed the appointments and, in so doing, gave the gospel of assimilation official imperial endorsement.¹³⁰

But economic and social rights were not yet completely won. There still remained in force other "obnoxious ordinances" operating against the interests of coloured people. It was against these exclusions and restrictions "a result of the abated but still unhappy colonial system", that the coloured people petitioned early in 1824.¹³¹ "It is," they proclaimed, "in the fraternisation of two classes of people distinct it is true by their complexion, but in every other respect assimilated to one another, and in which important object lays the growth, prosperity, and grandeur of this colony."¹³²

In December, 1825, Louis Thornton, a coloured man who had considerable property in Berbice, told the Right Honourable Wilmot Horton, M.P., that he was asked by "the unhappy free coloured colonists" of that territory to procure an abolition of "the discouraging and degrading distinctions" which prevailed there.¹³³

In London, James Blair was still maintaining that it was necessary to preserve colour distinctions in the West Indies and was preaching the doctrine of gradualism. In March, 1826, he wrote a letter to Wilmot Horton, opposing the return of Beard to Berbice.¹³⁴ But Blair and his kind were like voices in the wilderness. Even as they preached their own brand of economic and social dogma, coloured people were winning tacit concessions in Berbice.¹³⁵ Coloured people bought up pews in church as soon as vacancies occurred. A Mr. Trimes became the first coloured man to be buried in ground allotted to whites. Objection ceased to be raised to the appointment of coloured persons as curators to the estates of deceased persons.¹³⁶

In 1830, the prospect of territorial union brought a new fear. The coloured free still suffered from such "uncharitable" grievances as exclusion from the right to vote in the Lutheran vestry. But they were equally concerned with implications of Union in relation to the political and social rights which they enjoyed over and above the coloured people of Demerara and Essequibo and with which territories they had never hoped to become united.¹³⁷

The coloured free of Berbice, since 1822, had made most admirable progress. Time and experience, Beard wrote home, had long since proved "the propriety of conceding to the free coloured population those just rights and privileges which blind prejudice and usurped Colonial authority had so long withheld from them and placing them at once upon an equality with the white inhabitants."¹³⁸

Beard had appointed many coloured persons to "offices of Trust and emolument." One coloured freeman, possessed of very considerable wealth in the Colony consisting of estates, slaves and money, was only recently nominated for a seat in the Court of Civil Justice. Beard was in 1830 quite sure that in Berbice "all distinctions between the white and free coloured inhabitants (had) at last been completely overcome." He had no doubt "but that if the present liberal line of policy towards them be continued under the declared sanction of His Majesty's Government," "the well educated and respectable part of the free coloured inhabitants" would be found before long "in the full enjoyment of a fair and liberal participation of those stations in Colonial Society which are still in some instances considered to belong exclusively to the whites."

The coloured people, on the eve of unification, however, felt an "anxious solicitude" not only for the security of the privileges they already possessed but also for all the other rights, "the solid enjoyment whereof has not yet been conceded them." They confessed their extreme fear that if the government of Berbice were placed under that of Demerara, this would have had the effect of preventing the extension of further privileges to the coloured free of Berbice and perhaps introduce the old restrictive system. The coloured free who directed this memorial to Beard felt justified in their fears as none of the political advantages which free coloured inhabitants of Berbice enjoyed had yet been extended to the coloured free of Demerara.¹³⁹

Beard agreed that these fears were not altogether "without foundation" and, in order to prevent such a doubtful situation arising, advised the issue of a proclamation "declaratory of their rights."¹⁴⁰

It was evident that when territorial integration came, the conditions were not yet completely established for economic and social integration. The economic and social rights of the coloured free population throughout Guiana were still somewhat overshadowed. They could more readily become members of the planter class but their freedom was still somewhat qualified. When the proclamation of freedom came then, it held the same significance for the coloured slave population as it did for the coloured free population throughout the land of Guiana. And since the coloured free of Berbice enjoyed rights far greater than the coloured free in the rest of the British Caribbean,¹⁴² the significance of emancipation throughout the rest of the Caribbean was no less than it was in Guiana.

REFERENCES

1. *Memorandum of Stephen* (October, 1831)—Kenneth N. Bell; W. P. Morrell *Colonial Policy—Select Documents on British Colonial Policy*—Oxford 1928—p. 382.
2. C.O. 111/11—*Bentinck to Liverpool*—26 December, 1811.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Milliroux—*op. cit.*—p.7.
5. William Hillhouse—*op. cit.*—p.254, 256.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. Bolingbroke—*op. cit.*—p.329.
9. Milliroux—*op. cit.*—p.93
10. St. Clair—*op. cit.*—p.15
11. *Ibid.*
12. C.O. 111/1—*Edward Thompson to Secretary of States*—22 April, 1781.
13. C.O. 111/3—*Beaujon to Portland*—24 January, 1799.
14. C.O. 111/73—*Van Batenburg to Charles Graham*—15 September, 1797.
15. C.O. 111/3—*Beaujon to Portland*—24 January, 1799.
16. C.O. 111/73—*Van Batenburg to Portland*—January, 1799.
17. C.O. 111/11—*Liverpool to Bentinck*—21 December, 1811.
18. C.O. 111/78—*Gordon to Liverpool*—1 November, 1811.
19. C.O. 111/88—*Report of a Committee to examine the state of income and expenditure of the Colony of Berbice*, 5 January, 1818.
20. C.O. 111/97—*Beard to Horton*—13 January, 1824.
21. C.O. 111/107—*Berbice Blue Book—Enclosure—Receiver. General to Secretary of States* 10 February, 1830.
- 22.
23. R. Montgomerie Martin—*op. cit.*—volume 11—1834—p. 31.
24. C.O. 111/109—*Beard to Murray*,—8 February, 1830.
25. Milliroux—*op. cit.*—p. 12
26. C.O. 111/103—*Thomas Moody to R. Wilmot Horton*—15 May, 1826. Between 1794 and 1799 Katz was granted over 12,000 acres of land on the West Coast of the river Corentyne.
27. C.O. 111/96—*Petition from William Fraser, formerly of Berbice, then residing in the city of London*—19 October, 1823.
28. *Ibid.*
29. C.O. 111/96—*James Blair to R. Wilmot Horton*—30 July, 1823.
30. C.O. 111/74—*Van Batenburg to Camden*—30 October, 1804.
31. C.O. 111/96—*Beard to Bathurst*—21 April, 1823—Enclosure.
32. *Ibid.*

33. Milliroux—*op. cit.*—p. 7.
 34. C.O. 111/105—*Confidential letter from D. Power, Protector of Slaves*—
 7 September, 1827.
 35. *Ibid.*
 36. *Ibid.*
 37. *Ibid.*
 38. C.O. 111/96—*Petition to Secretary of States from William Fraser formerly of
 Berbice*—19 October, 1823.
 39. C.O. 111/97—*Beard to Bathurst*—28 April, 1824.
 40. Landowner—*Demerara after fifteen years of freedom*—London, 1853—p. 28.
 41. *Ibid.*—p. 47.
 42. *Ibid.*—p. 47, 48.
 43. Bolingbroke—*op. cit.*—p. 215.
 44. *Ibid.*
 45. *Ibid.*—p. 217-218.
 46. *Ibid.*—p. 83.
 47. *Ibid.*—p. 83-84.
 48. *Ibid.*—p. 41, 49.
 49. C.O. 111/99—*Beard to Bathurst*—4 August, 1825.
 50. Milliroux—*op. cit.*—p. 7, 8.
 51. C.O. 111/84—*Beard to Bathurst*—12 August, 1816.
 52. *Ibid.*
 53. *Ibid.*
 54. *Ibid.*
 55. *Ibid.*
 56. C.O. 111/86—*Bentinck to Bathurst*—20 May, 1817.
 57. *Ibid.*
 58. C.O. 111/96—*Beard to Bathurst*—16 January, 1823—Enclosure.
 59. *Ibid.*
 60. C.O. 111/99—*Beard to Bathurst*—4 August, 1825.
 61. C.O. 111/102—*Beard to Bathurst*—21 July, 1826.
 62. Bolingbroke—*op. cit.*—p. 44.
 63. *Ibid.*
 64. *Ibid.*—p. 43.
 65. Milliroux—*op. cit.*—p. 11, 12.
 66. C.O. 111/15—*W. G. Straghan to Carmichael*—1 March, 1813.
 67. C.O. 111/96—*Beard to Bathurst*—12 January, 1823.
 68. C.O. 111/94—*Beard to Bathurst*—24 December, 1822.
 69. C.O. 111/3—*Beaujon to Portland*—24 January, 1799.
 70. C.O. 111/11—*Bentinck to Liverpool*—26 December, 1811.
 71. R. Montgomery Martin—Volume II—1834—*op. cit.*—p. 32.
 72. C.O. 111/73—*Van Batenburg to Portland*—January, 1799.
 73. R. Montgomery Martin—Volume II—1834—*op. cit.*—p. 32.
 74. Milliroux—*op. cit.*—p. 7.
 75. Bolingbroke—*op. cit.*—p. 25.
 76. *Ibid.*—p. 50, 51.
 77. *Ibid.*—p. 52.
 78. C.O. 111/2—*Turnbull Forbes & Co. to Portland*—23 August, 1798, forwarding
 a memorial from John Daly, Esq.
 79. *Ibid.*
 80. *Ibid.*
 81. C.O. 111/94—*Beard to Bathurst*—22 November, 1822.
 82. C.O. 111/94—*Beard to Bathurst*—24 December, 1822.
 83. *Ibid.*
 84. C.O. 111/105—*Confidential letter from D. Power, Protector of Slaves*—
 7 September, 1827.
 85. C.O. 111/94—*Beard to Bathurst*—24 December, 1822.
 86. C.O. 111/100—*Louis C. Thornton to R. Wilmot Horton, M.P.*—23 December, 1825.

87. Bolingbroke—*op. cit.*—p.44.
88. C.O. 111/94—*Beard to Bathurst*—24 December, 1822.
89. *Ibid.*
90. C.O. 111/96—*Beard to Bathurst*—13 May, 1823—Enclosure.
91. C.O. 111/102—*Beard to Bathurst*—11 January, 1826.—Enclosure.
92. *Ibid.*
93. *Ibid.*
94. C.O. 111/97—*Beard to R. Wilmot Horton*—15 March, 1824. Enclosure—*Extract from Minutes of Council of Government*, 7 January, 1824.
95. C.O. 111/102—*Beard to Bathurst*—11 January, 1826—Enclosure.
96. *Ibid.*
97. C.O. 111/94—*Beard to Bathurst*—24 December—Enclosure.
98. *Ibid.*
99. *Ibid.*
100. *Ibid.*
101. *Ibid.*
102. *Ibid.*
103. C.O. 111/94—*Beard to Bathurst*—22 November, 1822.
104. *Ibid.*
105. *Ibid.*
106. C.O. 111/94—*Beard to Bathurst*—24 December, 1822.
107. *Ibid.*
108. C.O. 111/94—*Beard to Bathurst*—22 November, 1822—Enclosure.
109. *Ibid.*
110. *Ibid.*
111. C.O. 111/94—*Beard to Bathurst*—December, 1822—Enclosure.
112. *Ibid.*
113. *Ibid.*
114. *Ibid.*—Enclosure *George Katz to Beard*—16 December, 1822.
115. *Ibid.*
116. *Ibid.*
117. *Ibid.*
118. *Ibid.*
119. *Ibid.*
120. C.O. 111/95—*White planters and merchants petition to Bathurst*—18 December, 1822.
121. *Ibid.*
122. *Ibid.*
123. C.O. 111/96—*Beard to Bathurst*—13 May, 1823—Enclosure.
124. C.O. 111/96—*Beard to Bathurst*—12 January, 1823.
125. *Ibid.*
126. C.O. 111/96—*Beard to Bathurst*—28 January, 1923—Enclosure.
127. *Ibid.*
128. C.O. 111/96—*Beard to Bathurst*—13 May, 1823—Enclosure.
129. *Ibid.*
130. C.O. 111/96—*Beard to Bathurst*—1 August, 1823.
131. C.O. 111/97—*Beard to R. Wilmot Horton*—15 March, 1824—Enclosure.
132. *Ibid.*
133. C.O. 111/100—*Louis C. Thornton to R. Wilmot Horton, M.P.*—23 December, 1826.
134.
135. C.O. 111/103—*Henry and others to Thornton and Pierce*—20 May, 1826.
136. *Ibid.*
137. C.O. 111/110—*Beard to Murray*—8 September, 1830—Enclosure.
138. *Ibid.*
139. *Ibid.*
140. *Ibid.*
141. *Ibid.*
142. C.O. 111/96—*Beard to Bathurst*—12 January, 1824.

Tobago Villagers in the Mirror of Dialect

H. B. MEIKLE

MANY of us refrain from using dialect save when we want to underline an expression. For instance, something happens, we become exasperated and say *darg na eat darg* (Dog don't eat dog). We are certain now that we have been understood, and, moreover, have expressed ourselves memorably.

The imagery of dialect bears the colour of the lives of the people. If a villager calls on another just for a moment he says *me only come for take fire*. This is one of the happy creations of dialect. For these neighbours cook on wood fires and light them by obtaining brands from each other. There is not much time for talk when on business of *taking fire*. For the morning meal must be prepared so that both husband and wife will be in time for work.

There is much gossip in village life, the favourite theme being human relationship. If John has returned from Trinidad and set up in trial marriage with Jane it is easily explainable. For *ole fire stick easy for catch*. But *na seh so leh dem hear you* (Don't let them hear you saying so). It might cause enmity. For all you know you might be *sitting on de river-stone an' talking 'bout de river*. This caution is a reminder that people at one end of the island who appear to be strangers might in reality be cousins. In fact cousins are so many that a man might make specific reference to his *cousin-family*.

Despite all this, prejudice exists. A man settles in a village where he has neither kith nor kin and he is referred to as *stranger-nigger*. In a way he is suspect and stands alone. If anything happens, there is no one to take his side. There have been occasions when *stranger-niggers* have met their death in villages, and no one came forward to say how or why it happened. It is curious that after the abolition of slavery the ex-slaves who became landowners called themselves *strangers*. Probably they too were *stranger-niggers* made so by the difference in caste which land-ownership confers.

Ay and *hi* are used for drawing attention and expressing surprise. For instance, *Ay gal! a-wey you a-go!* You are surprised at someone's behaviour and you say *hi* prolonging the *i* and inflecting the sound upwards. Visitors from Trinidad who spend a few months here complain that *hi* has got into their vocabulary and that they have to make an effort to get it out. No doubt it is good English, but Trinidadians like other provincials have their prejudices.

Dialect defies orthography and school-grammar. Changing *v* into *b* is indeed nearly a rule.

The use of *a* (short) is perplexing. *Me na a-go* is the equivalent of "I shall not go". *Na* is the negative and *a-go* in this expression is like *a-walking*, *a-fishing*. Long ago you actually heard the old English form: *Ah we been a-fishereng*, that is, *We went fishing*. *Ah we* is the equivalent of *all we* or *we all*. But old English *a-fishing* is now almost dead.

"Ah" frequently takes the places of *is* or *are*. *Ah who yuh a-look for?* means *What are you looking for* or as they sometimes put it, *Is wha' you looking for?*

The *th* sound usually becomes *t* or *d*. *They say* is *dem seh*. *Dem seh* is a handy and serviceable expression. Scandal-mongers in particular prefer the impersonal form. *Dem seh* is sometimes used as a noun and a woman might say with pride *Me na in dem seh*.

On the whole corruptions are interesting. A man quarrels with his unruly son and threatens to beat him "four and a half". He means "fore and aft". In this little community nautical expressions might be the heritage of the days of slavery and sugar-ships or of more recent times when our coast was served for commercial purposes by sailing vessels manned by private enterprise.

A visitor to the island in a certain village bought a dog named Centipede. A few days later he pointed out that the dog did not respond to its name. I explained that the former owner spoke dialect and that the dog knew its name as *San-ta-pee*. He told me afterwards that he said *San-ta-pee* and got excellent response.

An interesting corruption arises from the use of the expression, *Be off!* Not long ago a woman was narrating her difficulties. She had separated from her husband in a village where he had many cousins, and this had caused her to be unpopular. She lived mainly by gardening and when she sought help for heavy work she could get none. But after a time the men relented. One even proposed to set up in house-keeping with her. But she had not forgotten what she had suffered at their hands. *De man bole!* she exclaimed. *Ee tink me forget how dem lef me pan me han! You should a-hear how me be-haff am out a me door.*

Massa is master. *Macá* is food and *maca pouchet* the remains of food. *Niam* means eat. The coconut is *lion* no doubt on account of its size, and it is also *six-months* because people have served that term in prison for the larceny of nuts. The breadfruit is *cow* and *garden-bread*. Not surprisingly there are *jumbie* plantains.

Shin is *shank* or *shenk* and Oriental Yam is not even rental yam but renter yam. *Melongene* has become *balongene* and *path* has been shortened to *pa*. The local proverb is, *Pa far ochroe spoil*. Cassava is *cassada*. The ankle is sensitive to pain and is called *foot-eye* and the palm of the hand *han-belly*. To strike a person with the flat of a cutlass is to *planass* or *planaisse* the person. *Saggai* and *taddai* are both used instead of cutlass.

A love potion in the vernacular of the people is *stay-home*. It is sometimes administered by women to freedom-loving males who go *a-coatening* one person after another. So that many village swains politely decline staying to supper with sweethearts, for *stay-home* is not infrequently a harmful concoction, and has been known to cost more than one man his life.

Bathing has taken the form of *badin* and sometimes *barking*. But *barking* has a connotation different from the ordinary bath. It is applied to the act of bathing people in water with an infusion of herbs for the purpose of casting off spirits. For spirits ride the persecuted. You hear someone say, *Ee a-ride* and you look around expecting to see a rider on donkey or bicycle. Instead you see the person in question tossing and foaming on the ground, or performing movements on his legs with acrobatic dexterity. The person is indeed not riding but is being ridden by a spirit which is envisaged as sitting on the shoulders of the ridden one with legs entwined around his neck. This image of the legs of the spirit around the neck of the ridden is also rendered by the expression *bow tek am*. Here the legs of the spirit around the neck are visualised as being in the form of a bow and the spirit is itself referred to as *bow*.

Anyone who lives long in a village hears of the *rookshan* bushes. These bushes are used for ridding the persecuted of malignant spirits. They wreak *destruction* among spirits. *Destruction*, the original word, became "ruction" and the corrupted form is today "rookshan".

The negative *na* so frequently used in dialect is probably a legacy of the days of sugar when many of the estates were owned by Scotsmen. But there are other memories of Scotch settlement. You might hear an old villager refer to Scots Kirk. *Me bin a-tek me schoolin' in Scots Kirk*. In the 19th Century Scotch settlers erected a small building in Scarborough to serve as a Kirk. This was converted into an Anglican School and the literate public knows it to be that. But memory is long in those who live by oral tradition and if the educated have forgotten that it was once Scots Kirk the old dialect speakers have not. And referring to the building by its old name these people call to mind an incident in the cultural history of the island.

In travelling through the villages you might hear a woman threaten to "raise Bellmanna war". This is an illusion to an incident that occurred in the year 1876. In that year there was a dispute on the Roxborough Estate. The discontents were treated to rum. Trouble seemed imminent. The Riot Act was read and a volley supposedly of blank cartridges was fired. But there was something wrong. A woman was killed and the crowd now wild broke into the barracks and beat Corporal Bellmanna to death.

In dialect there is abundant testimony of the beliefs of the people. A white fowl is an important bird to many. Its colour suggests purity and in an emergency it provides a ready sacrifice to ancestors. You do great injury to another if you steal his white fowl. Someone who is picking on another might be told, *Yuh moder dead long time. Is na me wha eat she white fowl.* (Your mother is dead a long time. I did not eat her white fowl). This is equivalent to: I have done you no grievous injury and your persecution is unwarranted.

Dialect expresses psychological truths. Repression is bad so of a person accustomed to suppress his thoughts it is said: *Ting a-go kill am ah ee stomach.* (*Ah* here is equivalent to *in*). Translated the saying means: "The things that he keeps in his stomach will kill him".

Tobago villagers seem not to have quite made up their minds about how a brilliant idea is born in the mind of the thinker: *Man na know wha ee a-do for know*, they say and pass on to the daily round of village life.

There is an interesting saying among villagers that leads to the assumption that husbands have no extraordinary value. And a young woman pining for a deceased husband might be advised by an old crony to stop her grief. The advice would be given in the terse and incisive dialect: *Man dead, man deh ah world*. The philosophy is that grief over one man is wasted since another can be had to take his place. The reason for this attitude may be that marriage for the Tobagonian is often an economic affair. The man and the woman are indeed help-meets. And when a husband dies leaving a woman with three or four children she finds that she cannot maintain them by her own efforts. She must either marry again or set up with a common law husband for the sake of a livelihood. But there is another side to this which is quite evident when children refer to mother and father—words which are rendered by “Mama” and “Papa”. With the children it is usually *Me Mama seh* and seldom *me Papa seh*. One is almost forced to the conclusion that in the home father counts for little and that mother is by far the more important person.

At wedding-dances usually held on the night preceding the marriage ceremony there is yet stronger evidence of the place of the male in the community. There is singing and dancing to the beating of drums. The words of a favourite song are as follows:

Married man ah darg, O!

Single man a-roll, O!

All man ah man, O.

One a dog and the other a rolling stone. Certainly there is no high estimate of either. The point is expressed even more forcibly in the saying, *All man ah darg, but married man ah double darg, O!*

This being the current outlook the male becomes wily. *Me na want cat in bag*, he says, referring to women. He must know them well before embarking upon marriage. So that pre-marital experiments are frequent and not uncommonly a man and a woman have lived in a house for years and become father and mother before marrying.

The villager lives at peace with his neighbours but nevertheless has his reservations about them. *Nothin good a-come out a black hen chicken*, he says. This generalisation requires limitation. But the verdict is not surprising for in small rural communities each man knows his brother through and through.

Proverbs like those referred to above are known in dialect as *parables*. The villager reads his Bible and finds a likeness between the hidden meaning of his proverbs and Bible parables. You quote a proverb and he is surprised that *you know parables*. These proverbs are usually introduced with the words *De ole people say*. *Old people* here means ancestors and this brief introduction gives authority to the saying just as *The Lord said* does

in the Bible. Thus it is: *De ole people seh : Pickney can eat Mama but Mama can't eat pickney.* Or *De ole people seh: Ram goat seh: me na cry for horn, me cry for livin'; when livin' come horn will grow.* The history of civilisation testifies to the wisdom of the ram-goat.

The economy of words observed by dialect speakers is often remarkable. Frequently verbs are omitted. A local Hebrew scholar told me that in his study of Hebrew he was helped considerably by his knowledge of dialect because of its compactness. Perhaps the reason is that countrymen everywhere use the same short sentences and no elaborate grammar. But there might be another explanation. Up to about fifty years ago the country West Indian of African descent learnt his English from the Bible. He learnt many phrases which he altered to suit the rhythm and accent of his old tongue. For instance the Tobagonian says *is go ah goin'* (it's go I'm going) which recalls Biblical expressions like *blessing I will bless thee* or *multiplying I will multiply thee*. A characteristic expression is, *it rain so til-l-i-l-i!* and this conveys the idea of heavy and continuous rain to all who have the dialect. A similar use of *until* is to be found in Hebrew.

The romance of Tobago dialect begins in Africa and is continued through England, Scotland and France. The expressions which savour of French are hardly the result of French occupation of the island. More probably, they were brought here by Grenadian settlers in the 19th Century.

Dialect reflects customs and outlook. In it are preserved the moralising that help to hold society together at certain stages of development—sayings that enshrine a great deal of wisdom.

The following are among the oft quoted proverbs.

Stranger na know burial-groun'. Strangers do not know the locality of the burial-ground. Here the burial-ground represents evil. As applied the proverb often means that a stranger in a district cannot differentiate between well-doers and evil doers.

Wha' dey ah snake head dey ah bean-stick head. What is up in the snake's head is also in the bean-stick's head. The bow-stick some say is the crook-stick used for controlling bushes when cutlassing. Others say it is the bean-stick that people walk with. Snakes are killed by the means of the bean-stick which guided by the mind of man is every whit equal to the subtlety of the snake.

Han' go han' come. Those who lend a hand in the work of cultivation go and others come. The saying reflects the impermanence of things.

Not every fly dat light pon you you mus' brush. That is, do not offend everyone who annoys you.

Pa far ochroe spoil. As applied the proverb is equivalent to: "The eye of the master fattens the cow".

Ashes cole puppy lay down. The ashes is cold and the pup lies down. Young people take advantage of old people.

Beg fire can' boil dry peas. You cannot beg for fire to boil dry peas. The cooking of dry peas requires much heat and your neighbour cannot give enough fire for the purpose. You must collect enough wood and make your own fire. In other words, some difficulties are to be overcome only by your own effort.

Pretty doesn' go in pot. Beauty cannot be cooked or eaten. As regards value, appearances can be misleading. The saying is equivalent to: *All that glitters is not gold.*

Every day leaf dey ah groun' ee mus' rot. Leaves that have fallen to the ground will rot. Used in the same sense as: "Evil communications corrupt good manners".

When you na put clothes outside you na a-look for rain. When you have not put clothes to dry outside you do not look for rain. In its context this saying often means that those who have done no evil do not fear revenge.

Calabash na a-bear pumpkin. A calabash tree does not bear pumpkins. Both the calabash and the pumpkins are gourds. The latter is edible and the former is not. The proverb is equivalent to: *By their fruits ye shall know them.*

You na know where water a-walk a-go ah pumpkin belly. You do not know how the water in the pumpkin gets there. The Shakespeare lover might have said, *There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy.*

When you sen' a child, you foot cold but you heart na cold. That is, when you send a child on an errand that you ought to have done, you have easy feet but an anxious heart.

Every barrow-hog got dem Saturday. Every barrow-hog has its Saturday. Hogs are butchered in villages on Saturdays. This proverb is equivalent to, *To-day for me tomorrow for you.*

Dem who a-do good for jumbie ah dem jumbie a-knock. Those who enter into traffic with spirits are the ones who are injured by them. Founded on the belief that one might enter into commerce with spirits. It is another way of saying that you reap ingratitude for the good that you do.

Wha dey in de ole goat will come out in de kid. Used in the same sense as: *The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge.*

Children who na a-listen to dey moder drink hot water widout sugar. The mothers teach the children and those who will not learn will have bitter experiences.

Darg foot bruk : ee fin' ee massa quick. A dog quickly finds its master when its foot is broken.

When de pig ask ee moder why ee mout' so long de moder say : Pickney a-come you a-come. When the pig asks its mother why her mouth is so long she answers: *Child you are growing. Experience teaches wisdom.*

When green bush fall ah water ee na a-rot same time. A leaf that has fallen in the water does not rot immediately. The consequences of evil doing are not immediate.

When trouble a-come shell na a-blow. The blowing of shells heralds an event of importance. For instance, a catch of fish, a house on fire. But trouble comes without warning.

Trouble na a-tell massa ee a-come. Trouble comes without warning upon rich and poor.

Pasture boy na get nothin' for do, ee go shake Gobernor hand. Idleness leads to mischief.

Goat-dung bin a-wan' for roll long time before win' blow am. Of someone looking for cause to quarrel.

When sea a-look for rain, ah so ee a-go. Of someone looking for trouble.

The remaining proverbs require no explanation:

When hag na grow you call am pig.

For me an' for you coo-coo can' soak in one pot.

Fowl ah house na hard for tame.

Lazy man can' eat manicou libber.

One han' na can' kill lice.

All food good for eat but na all 'tory good for talk.

Ebery day bucket go ah well one day ee rope mus' cut.

All tief know deir broder footprint in de san'.

Word ah mout' na load ah head.

Moon a-run day a-catch am.

Cockroach na have business before fowl.

Cockroach na have business in fowl funeral.

If you wan' for see dead, watch 'pan sleep.

Gulley na dey deep 'nough for hide wortless family.

What time mango ripe ee mus' drop.

Man die, grass grow ah ee door.

Hunting darg can' make house darg.

Family cutlass does cut deep.

Me a-brush garden for 'gouti for run race.

Ram goat say : Me prefer me mumma dead before de rain wet me in de evening.

Whey de horse tie dey ee mus' graze.

Behin' darg, "Darg". Before darg, Massa Darg.

Goat don' stray if ee get grass ah ee yard.

Wha eye na see heart na grieve.

When fowl get teeth darg get razor.

Since "beg pardon" dey ah worl' little boy mash big man foot.

Donkey ears long an' ee can hear ee own business.

Hag na rub ee back pon gru-gru tree.

Rain fall beef come ah house.

Quater-centenary of Richard Eden's 'Decades of the Newe Worlde or West India, Etc.'

JOHN A. RAMSARAN

FOUR hundred years ago was published the first substantial account in English dealing with the discovery of the West Indies. This was Richard Eden's 1555 translation from the Latin of Peter Martyr: *The Decades of the Newe Worlde or West India, conteyning the Navigations and Conquests of the Spanyardes, with particular description of the most ryche and large Landes and Islandes lately found in the West Ocean.*¹ Although it is evident from such works as Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* and John Rastell's *The Nature of the Four Elements* that educated men in England were acquainted with the work of European chroniclers on the discovery of the New World, it was not until the translations of Richard Eden that the New World travel writings were generally read in England. Eden's translations served as a stimulus to the first voyagers who issued from English ports to bring back first-hand accounts of their experiences many of which have been preserved in the monumental volumes of Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* and Samuel Purchas's *Hakluytus Posthumus; or Purchas his Pilgrimes*. Richard Eden was the worthy precursor of the "industrious Hakluyt" and Samuel Purchas; and his translations deserve to be better known.

In 1553 Eden produced his first literary work, a hurried translation of the fifth book of Sebastian Munster's *Universal Cosmography* which he entitled *A treatise of the newe India, with other newe founde landes and Islandes, as well eastwarde as westwarde, as they are knownen and found in these oure dayes, after the descripcion of Sebastian Munsier in his boke of uniuersall Cosmographie: wherein the diligent reader may see the good successe and rewarde of noble and honeste enterpryses, by the which not only worldly ryches are obtained, but also God is glorified, and the Christian fayth enlarged.* In 1554 the English Queen married the King of Spain and their union seemed to augur a glorious future for their two countries. Stirred by the triumph and splendour of the marriage procession of Queen Mary and Philip of Spain Eden set himself the task of making known to English readers the recent achievements of the Spanish voyagers. So there appeared in 1555 Richard Eden's translation from Peter Martyr's *De Orbe Novo* which Eden had read while still a boy—"olim adolescens perlegi Decades de Orbe Novo a Petro Martyre ab Angleria"². The *De Orbe Novo* was written in *Decades*, the first being published at Seville in 1511. Others followed in 1516, and subsequently enlarged editions appeared in 1530 and 1532.

Peter Martyr³ is of particular interest to Jamaica besides being the principal source of Eden's translation, for while he was Prior of the Cathedral of Granada he received the rents from the rich abbey of Seville in Jamaica.

He dedicated the money he received to the building of a stone church to take the place of the wooden one burnt down in the town of Seville, Jamaica. The inscription commemorating his gift was still in existence as late as the end of the seventeenth century when Sir Hans Sloane saw it.⁴ In one of his letters Peter Martyr mentioned Jamaica with obvious pride and affection:

*Mitto salutarem sponsam meam Iamaicam insulam . . . ubi non
hyems rigida non aestas torrida, ubi toto anno frondescunt, & una
fructibus onustae acerbis & maturis arbores, ubi semper prata
florescunt.⁵*

So Peter Martyr wrote his Latin letters to correspondents in his native Italy telling them about the news he was constantly receiving about the West Indies through personal interviews with or communications from sailors, captains and admirals. Acting as Intelligence Officer for the King of Spain he wrote the *Decades of De Orbe Novo* which was translated into several European languages before Eden's translation of 1555. This English version of *The Decades of the Neue Worlde or West India* was augmented by translations from the Spanish accounts of Lopez de Gómara and of Gonçalo Hernandez de Oviedo y Valdes.

The book opens with the voyages of Columbus related in much greater detail than the brief account in Munster's *Comographia Universalis*. The perilous situation in which Columbus found himself on the first Atlantic crossing is revealed in short, quick flashes:

*The Spanyardes . . . beganne fyrste to murmurre secretly among them
selues : and shortly after with wordes of reproche spake euyll of
Colonus theyr governour, and consulted with them selues, eyther
to rydde hym out of the waye, or elles to cast hym into the sea :
Ragynge that they were deceyued of a straunger, and oullandishe
man, a Ligurian, a Geneues, and brought into suche daungerous
places, that they myght neuer returne ageyne. And after .xxx.
days were paste, they furiously cryed out agaist him, and
threatened him that he shulde passe no further. But he euer with
ientyll wordes and large promyses, appeased theyr furie, and
prolonged day after day, some tyme desyring them to beare with
him yet a whyle, and some time putting them in remembraunce
that if they shulde attempte any thinge agaynst him, or other wise
disobey hym, it wolde be reputed for treason. Thus after a fewe
dayes, with cherefull hartes they espied the lande longe looked for.⁶*

Later we follow the Spanish boats along the coast of Hispaniola and Cuba:

*As they coasted alonge by the shore of certayne of these Ilandes,
they herde nightingales syng in the thycke woodes in the month
of Nouember. They found also great riuers of freshe water, and
naturlall hauens, of capacitie to harborowe greate nauies of shippes.*

The numerous small islands afforded Columbus the opportunity of playing the role of Adam in the New World: he "gave names to seuen hundred Ilandes by the waye: Leauying also . . . three thousande here and there".⁸ On one occasion, indeed, it seemed to him that "the sea was euery where entangled with Ilandes".

The general impression left in the reader's mind is a panorama of Indian tribes wandering in the cover of dark-green forests, where parrots flash past like a streak of emerald and gold; and where women in naked beauty surprise the men of another world who move as in a dream supposing for a moment that they see "*those most beautifull Dryades, or the nymphes or fayres of the fontaynes whereof the antiquites speake so much*".¹⁰ Incongruities are reconciled as in a dream for these Arcadian glimpses alternate, or appear side by side with grim presentations of man-eating Caribs or of hurricanes—"violent and furious Furacanes, that plucked uppe greate trees by the rootes".¹¹ So the Decades succeed one another with repetitions and reiterations, and then portions of the tale are retold in the words of Oviedo and Gómara.

Shortly after Eden's death a new edition of his *Decades* was published in 1577 by Richard Willes under the title of *The history of Travayle in the West and East Indies and other countreys lying eyther way, etc.* It contained hitherto unpublished material on the eastern routes, but added nothing to the 1555 information on the West Indies. So Richard Eden's *Decades of the Newe Worlde or West India*, 1555, had become the standard English work on the West Indies supplying useful historical and geographical information about the Caribbean. The islands were no longer for English navigators in some dim uncertain distance. Sir John Hawkins had made three slaving voyages and the account of the third one was written by himself: it appeared in 1569 as *A true declaration of the troublesome voyage to the parts of Guinea and the West Indies in 1567 and 1568*.

Starting with Columbus, more than one voyager had brought back New World natives to Europe, but there was still a confused picture in people's mind about the inhabitants of the West Indies. There were stories about the atrocities of the cannibals side by side with anecdotes like that which tells about an Indian sage who advised Columbus to look to the end of human existence: "*If therefore you acknowledge your selfe to bee mortall, and consyder that every man shall receave condigne rewarde or punyshement for such thinges as he hath done in this life, you will wrongefullly hurte no man*".¹² Such an instance as this might have led Eden to write in one of his prefaces: *But these simple gentiles lyuing only after the lawe of nature, may well be likened to a smoothe bare table unpainted, or a white paper unwritten, vpon the which yow may at the fyrist paynte or wryte what yow lyste, as yow can not vppon table already paynted, unlesse you rase or blot owt the fyriste formes.*¹³

Columbus's delusion about his having reached India when he touched the islands of the Caribbean gave the natives of the New World a unity that existed only in the minds of Europeans who thought of the diverse tribes as one huge and scattered family of Indians. However, in many respects Eden's translation supplied English readers with information not otherwise available: they learnt much about the plants and animals, the natives and their way of life, and the climate and geographical position of the Caribbean islands. So to most people in England four hundred years ago the West Indies and the rest of the New World extended this welcome in the words of Peter Martyr charmingly translated by Richard Eden:

We offer unto yowe the Equinoctiall line hetherto vnownen and burnte by the furious heade of the soonne and the unhabitable after the opinion of the owlde wryters a fewe excepted: But nowe founde to bee most replenished with people, faire, frutefull, and moste fortunate, with a thowsande Ilandes crowned with golde and bewtifull perles, besyde that greate portion of earth supposed to bee parte of the firme lande, excedyng in quantilie three Europes. Come therfore and embrase this newe worlde.¹⁴

FOOTNOTES

1. See Arber, E.—*The First Three English Books on America*, Birmingham, 1885. All quotations from Eden's translation are taken from this book which is referred to briefly as *Arber* in this article. The reader is referred to this book and Professor E. G. R. Taylor's *Tudor Geography*, London, 1930 for details of Richard Eden's life and writings and his importance as a geographer.
2. *Arber*, p. 47.
3. There is an interesting essay on Peter Martyr in J. B. Thacher's *Christopher Columbus*, New York, 1903-1904.
4. Sloane, Sir Hans—*A voyage to the Islands Madera, Nieves, S. Christophers, and Jamaica, etc.*, London, 1707, pp. lxvi-lxvii.
5. Thacher, *Op. cit.*, vol. 1. p. 30.
6. *Arber*, p. 66.
7. *Arber*, p. 66.
8. *Arber*, p. 75.
9. *Arber*, p. 77.
10. *Arber*, p. 83.
11. *Arber*, p. 81.
12. *Arber*, p. 78.
13. *Arber*, p. 57.
14. *Arber*, p. 64.

Ballad of Canga

By ERIC ROACH

Canga Brown is coming down
Stilted on his legend
Taller than a tall man,
Living beyond his end.

He is a old Ashantee man
Full of wickedness;
Bring obeah straight from Africa;
What he curse don't bless.

They gang him in the cane field;
Wouldn't raise a straw.
"Get up and work old man; look sharp."
"Work is not for Canga."

They tie him to the whipping post
In the greathouse yard;
Big whip peeling off his back,
The missis bawling hard.

Canga working obeah bad,
Throwing all the pain
Hotter than he get it
On the bacra woman.

They let him go and chase him
To maroon in the bush.
"Go you worthless nigger,
Let hungry eat your flesh."

But Canga go and sit down
By a tamarind tree,
Beat drum and call Damballa
Till his belly hungry.

He plant a plantain sucker,
Fill a tub with water,
Fish mullet from the water,
Cut plantain in one hour.

When moon go down old Canga
Put his skin in a jar,
Fly in a ball of fire :
Man turn soucouyan !

He suck the white man blood
Till his flesh come dry.
Only three days later
The man lay down and die.

He suck the baccra breeding sow
Till the hog come lean.
"Ent this hog was making pig?"
"Everyone gone clean."

What give Canga Brown that power?
He don't eat salt nor sugar;
His flesh fresh like Ibo yam,
His blood like clean rain water.

The devil come for Canga
Riding four black horses;
But Canga make black magic
And turn to two jackasses.

"Canga Brown! Ba Canga O!"
"Where the old man gone?"
Jackass braying loud like hell
Behind the baccra barn.

When God come for the man
And call him : "Canga, Canga."
That old sinner tie his mouth;
Not he, he wouldn't answer.

God stretch out his crookstick :
"Sinner, get up, go down."
"Look, if I going up or down,
"Lord, call me Mister Brown."

God vex until he laugh in heaven;
Pull a big chair for Canga.
Is that why when the man dead
You hearing so much thunder.

Ballad of Canga

BY ERIC ROACH

Translation in the Rural Creole of Surinam (Taki Taki) by Albert Helman

Canga Brown e waka-kon
Tikoko na en tori
Langa moro langa-man
A-e libi pasá dede.

Na wan owru Asjanti-man
Fulu nanga ogri,
Tja obia let' fu Afrika,
San a-e kos' n'e libi.

Den mek'a wroko na tjen-gron
A no wan trusu hanu.
"Kon, broko j'skien, ju lesi-man".
"Wrok' a no fu Canga".

Den tai en na pans-boko bun
A fes' Gran-masra hoso;
Wip' e pir' en baka-buba,
Bigi-Mis'e bari.

Canga e wroko obia
A-e trowé skin-hati
Moro faja lek'a kis' den
Baka dji bakra-uma.

Den lusu pur'en, jag'en gwé
Fu jajó na busi
"Gwé, no-waarti nengre, frut,
Mek' angri kir' ju tripa".

Ma Canga ewaka, a go sidón
Na sé wan tamarin—Con,
A nak' en dron, a kar' Damballa
Te en bere angri.

A pran' wan bana-tiki de
A fur' wan prapi watra
Na-a wakra disi a fanga trapún,
Wan jur nomo a ben kot bana.

Mun-kenki psa, di Canga go
Fu pok' en skin na djogo.
A fré gwe n'in' wan faja-star,
So sma e tron adzemá.

A soigi Masra brudu te
A man en skin kon dré-dré.
Dri dé no-mo, Masra didón
Den tjar 'en na ber-pe.

A soigi Bakra-hagu te
Soso bonjó ben tan.
"Na meki a hagú ben de f'meki".
"Now no wan pkien no de".

San krakti Canga Brown so-te?
Na di a n'e njan sowtu.
En meti steifi lek' napí,
En brudu krin lek' watra.

Didibri kon fu kis' Canga
A-e rei fo blaka nasi,
Ma Canga mek' en tapu de
A tron tu ston-buriki.

"Canga Brown, Ba-Canga-o!
Pe-a owru nengre kibri?"
Buriki e bar' a dorosé
Na bakra bakadjari.

Gado kon fu kis' a man,
Kar' en : "Canga, Canga!"
Owru pikadu-man tai en mofo,
En, a n'e go pikí.

Gado trus' en krakatiki
"Pikadu-man, opo, go bron!
Luku, mi Gado, a-was m'e fadon.
Kari mi Masra Brown".

Gado bigin fu laf' a tap'sé,
A har' bigi sturu dji Canga.
Na so, di a dede, alasmá
Ben jere fa liba bari.

Letters to the Editor

The Editor,

Caribbean Quarterly.

Sir,

Having read Mr. E. P. Banks' interesting article "Island Carib Folk Tales" (C.Q. Vol. 4, No. 1), I think it will be interesting if I pointed out certain parallels in the Tobago version of the tale of The Rabbit and the King, as it is told by local villagers from whom I have collected tales over a considerable period.

"Sister Margaret" becomes in the Tobago version "one wax-doll baby" described as "very pretty" and "well dressed up".

"Bra 'Nancy'" is the hero in the Tobago story and not Bra 'Gouti (Rabbit) in the Carib story.

"Bra 'Nancy'" regards the wax-doll's dumbness as a result of "love at first sight" and strikes her only when he becomes impatient over her delay to give it verbal expression.

Anancy "stole" and did not "defeated" in the King's water. There was a great drought in the land and all the water-gullies were dry.

The point made by Mr. Banks about the use of the word 'dirty' is interesting. In Tobago 'dirty' is used by the folk not only as a verb but also as a noun. "To dirty in one's pa' (path)" is a saying meaning 'to bring trouble on one's self by one's own evil deeds'. Again: "To rub dirty in a person's mouth" is, in popular speech, 'to take mean advantage of a person's weakness'.

Not only is this word "dirty" used figuratively as illustrated in the proverbs above but the word enters into ordinary literal use in conversation as both noun and verb interchangeably.

J. D. ELDER,
Scarborough,
Tobago.

The Editor,

Caribbean Quarterly.

Sir,

The excellent analysis of the theme of "Africa" in West Indian Poetry" brings to light some startling misconceptions in West Indian thought. The author specifically states that it is not a "real Africa" but an "emotional ancestral 'home'" for which the poets long. But this imaginary Africa is so far from the real that it negates the force of the poetry. The poets are nostalgic for the "past African power and greatness" which is symbolized by the Pyramids and the Sphinx. Since Herskovits and others have shown that virtually all New World Negroes came from a coastal strip of West Africa running from Gambia to Angola, this nostalgia is a little misplaced. It may be compared to an Australian of Irish ancestry boasting of his ancestors' achievements in building the Parthenon.

Even more unjustified is the objection that "Negroes dance and sing for others," and that their arts are prostituted. On the contrary, it is particularly through the arts that Negroes have gained the attention and the respect of the world; whether Louis Armstrong, Marian Anderson, Asadata Dafora, Katherine Dunham, or Josephine Baker in her bunch of bananas.

The most serious misconceptions are those about "some primitive, animal quality in Africa," the "great original beast" of the "African jungle," and the "untamed" sensuality and simplicity of African life. Alas for the poets, there are no jungles in West Africa, and almost no large wild animals. Those West Indian souls who take "the long road to Guinea" after death will find, not a "quiet village" of magic and dancing, but noisy, crowded cities, eroded fields, mangrove swamps, and busy industrial areas. At least they need feel no homesickness for Kingston or Port-au-Prince.

African cultures are far from moribund. The complexities of traditional African political and family structures, economics, law, and education fill many a ponderous tome the poets would do well to read. "Those who have invented nothing" are credited with superb bronze casting, wood and metalwork, intricate and specialized tools, built-up pottery, complicated looms, and a wealth of fabrics and trade goods which Africa has been turning out for a thousand years. While West Africans are not the heirs of the Pharaohs, neither are they "primitive" savages.

"The Negro writers of the Caribbean often seem to feel the need to affirm themselves as something different from Europeans" and long for "a way of life that is essentially their own, . . . not borrowed or imitated." How ironic then that their poetic expression should be cast in European forms, and be initiated by "the European fashion for the primitive," as the author of the article so clearly documents. What the poets do not realize is that "the habits of their souls" are not inheritable from African ancestors like skin colour or hair form. On the contrary, culture is learned behaviour, and "thought-molds" come with the language one learns as a child. These are the mechanisms by which "the great western world holds the West Indians in fee."

And yet there are aspects of West Indian life, attitudes learned from one generation to the next, which can be shown to have come from Africa; skill in music, dance, and speech, realism and a sliding scale of values, respect for ancestors and belief in the supernatural, the importance of "fêtes" and low esteem for manual labour, litigiousness and delight in quarrels, ridicule, and gossip, love for the show of wealth and power even at the cost of wealth and power, and particularly the preoccupation with the outward signs of class difference. If the poets will not read ethnographies, let them try Joyce Cary's remarkable novels of contemporary West Africa to see these and other correspondence.

A productive West Indian future requires no alien Egypt, "unreal" Africa, nor racial nationalism, but an informed appraisal of the implications of racial and cultural mixture, wherein the West Indies is several generations ahead of the rest of the world. As a Jamaican taxi driver once told me, "It's like coffee and milk, not so good by themselves, but put them together and you get something fine."

DANIEL J. CROWLEY,
Jumby Bridge,
33, Fourth Street,
Barataria, Trinidad.

6th June, 1955.

t
e
l
h
-
f
t
e
-
d
e
s
i
s
/
1

Designed and printed at the Government Printing Office, Trinidad, B.W.I.

